
THE LAND & THE BOOK
LEBANON
DAMASCUS
AND
BEYOND JORDAN
W. M. THOMSON











DIMESHK ESH SHÂM—DAMASCUS OF SYRIA.

The Land and the Book

OR

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATIONS DRAWN FROM THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS, THE SCENES AND SCENERY, OF

THE HOLY LAND

LEBANON, DAMASCUS

AND

BEYOND JORDAN

BY

WILLIAM M. THOMSON, D.D.

FORTY-FIVE YEARS A MISSIONARY IN SYRIA AND PALESTINE

147 ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS



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PREFACE.

THE previous volumes of this work—"Southern Palestine and Jerusalem" and "Central Palestine and Phœnicia"—were mainly devoted to the Promised Land west of the Jordan. The present volume—the third and last—relates to the Lebanon, Cœlesyria, Anti-Lebanon, Damascus, Bashan, Gilead, and the regions "beyond Jordan eastward." Though not originally included in the Land of Promise, those adjacent districts were closely connected with it. Some of them were the first that were occupied by the patriarchs of old, others were the first taken possession of by the Hebrew nation, and all of them were most intimately associated with the children of Israel in their social, civil, and religious institutions, and in their secular history. In traversing those regions, therefore, we are still in the land of the Bible, and drawing our Biblical illustrations from the manners and customs, the scenes and the scenery of the Holy Land.

The tours and the excursions described in this volume take a much wider range than those in the preceding portions of this work, and they lead to and through various regions rarely visited by the ordinary traveller, but which

are invested with peculiar and surprising interest. Lebanon, little more to the average reader of the Bible than a vague geographical expression, is not a single mount, but a long and lofty mountain range, abounding in picturesque and magnificent scenery, from which the inspired prophets and poets of the sacred Scriptures have derived some of their most exalted and impressive imagery. And the ancient cities in the regions beyond and east of the Jordan, whose prostrate temples, theatres, colonnades, and public and private buildings amaze and astonish the modern traveller, are not mere names, but impressive realities.

In the preparation of this volume the author has availed himself of the valuable archæological researches of the American Palestine Exploration Society and the Palestine Exploration Fund of England; and he has also incorporated into it many important and interesting observations derived from the publications of eminent writers and travellers who have recently visited the regions east of the Jordan.

The pictorial illustrations of manners and customs have been designed from photographs of living subjects, and the scenic views were composed from photographs taken by the author and by the exploration societies of England and America; and all of them have been drawn and engraved in London, Paris, and New York.

Great attention has been bestowed upon the spelling of proper names, and all who have any knowledge of the subject will appreciate its importance. The system adopted for this work is that of Dr. Edward Robinson, drawn up by himself and his fellow-traveller, Dr. Eli Smith, and submitted to the general meeting of the Syrian Mission. After care-

ful examination, in which the author participated, it was adopted by the mission; and it has gradually grown in public favor—has been accepted by the Palestine Exploration Fund of England, by the American Exploration Society, by recent writers, and in guide-books to the Holy Land. In addition to the ancient names of places which occur in our English Bible, the present Arabic names are added in all important cases—a feature, in this work, of much importance.

This volume of the Land and the Book is supplied with two carefully prepared indexes—one of texts, and the other of names and subjects—and the attention of the reader is directed to them, as they will facilitate reference to those parts of the work where the Scripture passages illustrated, and the subjects treated of, are to be found.

The present inhabitants of the Lebanon and of the regions beyond Jordan eastward are divided into many sects and tribes, differing in appearance and in manners and customs, and professing various antagonistic creeds and religions. We shall meet in our travels the courteous and warlike Druse, the industrious but superstitious Maronite, the orthodox Greek and the energetic Greek Catholic, the fanatical Muhammedan, the heretical Mutawâly, the heathen Nusaireh, the crafty Israelite, and the roving son of Ishmael; and the enervated and indolent Osmanli Turk is the lord of the land, dreaded but not respected by all his subjects, whose united prayer is, "O Lord. how long!"

W. M. T.



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INTRODUCTION.

PALESTINE, both east and west of the Jordan, may be fairly regarded as the divinely prepared tablet whereon God's messages to men have been graven in ever-living characters. This fact invests even the geography and topography of the Holy Land with special importance. But there are other considerations which impart to it a deeper and more practical interest. From this land we have received that marvellous spiritual and figurative nomenclature of the Bible through which nearly all true religious knowledge has been communicated to men. Here it was devised and first used, and here are found its best illustrations. We learn from history that it required fifteen centuries of time, and an endless array of providential arrangements, co-operating with human and superhuman agents and agencies, to bring this medium of intercourse between God and man to the needed perfection.

Numerous and complicated as were the instrumentalities employed, and for so many generations of human history, still they may be all grouped under two fundamental expedients—

The selecting, training, and governing of a peculiar people; and,

The creating and preparing an appropriate home for them.

Abraham and Canaan, the Hebrew Nation and the Land of Promise, the long ongoing and outworking of the Mosaic Economy, in conjunction with the people of God and the physical phenomena of their earthly Inheritance—by and through all these did the Spirit of Inspiration evolve and perfect man's religious language. Palestine, fashioned and furnished by the Creator's hand, was the arena, and the Hebrew people and the surrounding nations were the actors brought upon it, and made to perform their parts by the Divine Master. When the end and aim had been reached, the spiritual and figurative nomenclature fully developed and matured, the Gospel of Salvation was sent forth on its high mission of mercy amongst the nations of the earth.

Like other books, the Bible has had a home, a birthplace; but, beyond all other examples, this birthplace has given form and color to its language. The underlying basis of this wonderful dialect of the kingdom of heaven is found in the land itself. But as in the resurrection "that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual," so man's religious language was preceded by and grew out of the natural and the mundane. The material out of which was formed our spiritual dialect was of the earth earthy, requiring to be transformed and transfigured ere it could become a fit medium for things heavenly.

To study to the best advantage the transfiguration of that language, we must resort to Palestine, where it was first learned and spoken. That land, we repeat, has had an all-pervading influence upon the costume and character of the Bible. Without the former, the latter, as we now have it, could not have been produced. To ascertain this fact, and

to notice by what process of analogy and of contrast the physical and the mundane came to signify and illustrate things spiritual and heavenly, may well occupy much of our attention during this pilgrimage through the Holy Land.

Let us, therefore, deal reverently with it, walk softly over those acres once trodden by patriarchs, prophets, and poets, and even by the sacred feet of the Son of God himself. Let us put off the soiled sandal of worldliness and sin as we enter this consecrated domain. There is design in this peculiar grouping of mountains and plains, hills and valleys, lakes and rivers, the desert and the sea, all in intimate association with the marvellous and miraculous incidents and phenomena recorded in the Bible.

The Land and the Book constitute the all-perfect text of the Word of God, and can be best studied together. To read the one by the light of the other has been the privilege of the author for more than forty years, and the governing purpose in publishing is to furnish additional facilities for this delightful study to those who have not been thus exceptionally favored.

The sites and scenes described in the work were visited many times during the author's long residence in the country; and the results, so far as they bear on Biblical illustration, appear in the current narrative. The conversations are held by the way-side, on horseback, in the open country, or in the tent, and the reader is at liberty to regard himself as the author's travelling companion, in full sympathy with the purpose and aim of this pilgrimage through the Holy Land.





SAIDA--SIDON FROM THE NORTH.




MAP OF
LEBANON, COELESYRIA
AND
ANTI-LEBANON.
Scale of Miles
0
5
10
15
20
Scale of Miles
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Tartus
Bahrat Hums
Arka
El Mina
Tripoli
Zugharta
Ehden
Ras Ba'albek
Ras esh Shukah
Batrun
Jebeil
BYBLUS
El Burj
Beirut
Saida
SIDON
Ba'albek
HELIOPOLIS
Zahleh
Mejdel 'Anjar
CHALCIS
Jezzin
Hasbeiya
Rasheiyet el Wady
DAMASCUS
Jebel esh Sheikh
Anti Lebanon
COELESYRIA
Litany
Amud Ya'at
Kubbet Duris
Khan Murad
Kefr Kuk
Jebel Kasyun
Dummar
Es Salihiyeh
Jebel en Nusairiyeh
Huma
EMESA
35°30'
36°
36°30'
34°

THE LAND AND THE BOOK.

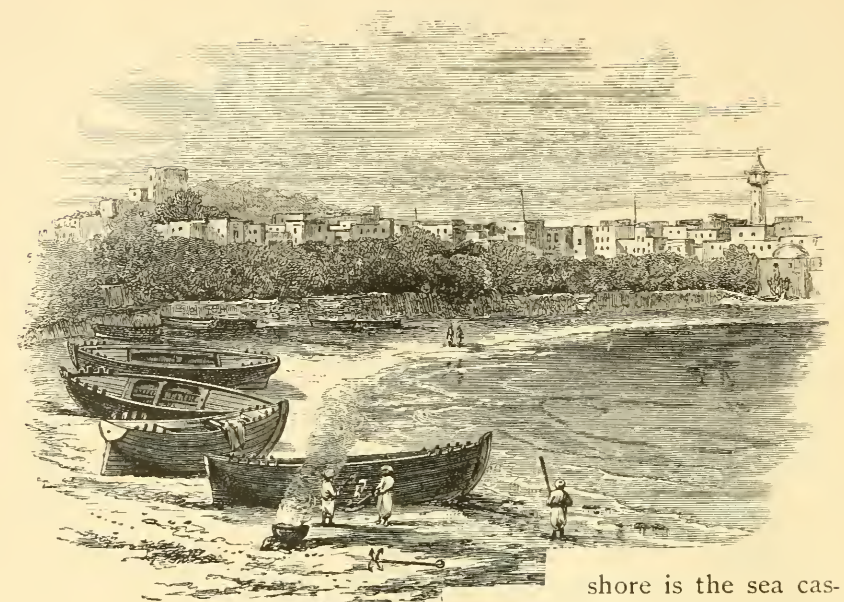
I.

SIDON TO BEIRÛT.

Sidon from the North.—Ancient Wall.—Boats drawn up on the Shore.—The Gardens of Sidon.—The Banana-tree.—Nâ'urah, or Water-wheel.—The Aqueduct.—El Auwaly, the Bostrenus.—The Bridge.—Bridges not Mentioned in the Bible.—Bridges in the Time of the Romans.—The Khân.—Migration of an Arab Tribe.—A Winter Storm. —An Officer of Sa'îd Beg.—Personal Experience.—A Bridal-party.—The Road from Sidon to Beirût.—Dahar Jûne, the Residence of Lady Hester Stanhope.—The Burial of Lady Hester.—Eccentricities of Lady Hester.—Neby Yûnas, Tomb of Jonah.—The Mother of Samuel.—"Horned Ladies."—Biblical Allusions to Horns.—The Story of Jonah and the Whale.—Berja.—El Jîyeh, Porphyreon.—Arabs at a Well.—Tattooing. —The Hebrews Forbidden to print Marks upon themselves.—Along the Sandy Beach, and over the Rocky Headlands.—Nŭkkâr es Sa'diât.—Defeat of Ptolemy's Army by Antiochus.—The Shepherd and the Sheep.—Ed Dâmûr, the Tamyras.—The Mulberry Gardens of Mu'allakah.—Sugar and the Sugar-cane.—The Sweet Cane of the Bible.— "The Burnings of Lime."—Lime Mentioned Twice in the Bible.—El Bellân, Thorn Bush.—Biblical Allusions to Thorns.—Raw or Burnt.—Pots and Plots.—"The Crackling of Thorns under a Pot."—Khân Khulda, Heldua.—Ghŭfr en Nâ'imeh.—One of St. Helena's Towers.—Broken Sarcophagi.—Esh Shuweifât.—Olive-grove.—Beauty of the Olive-tree.—"Oil out of the Flinty Rock."—Oil-presses.—Grafting.—"A Wild Olive-tree."—The Flower of the Olive.—"The Labor of the Olive."—"The Shaking of an Olive-tree."—The Gleaning of the Olive.—"Thy Children shall be like Olive-plants round about thy Table."—Dukkân el Kusîs.—"A Sea of Sand."—El Ghŭdîr. —El Kalabât.—Ibrahim Pasha and the Emîr of Shuweifât.—The Goodly Lebanon.— Picturesque Villages.—The Pines.—Arrival at Beirût.

May 27th.

To one riding along the sandy beach, and approaching Sidon from the north, the appearance of the city is quite imposing. About a quarter of a mile out to sea, and itself not much more than that in length, lies the Jezîreh—a low, rocky island, in the lee of which ships and large coasting craft cast anchor. Nearer the



BOATS DRAWN UP ON THE BEACH.

shore is the sea castle and its bridge of many arches connecting it with the city, which is built upon a promontory that rises gradually southward to the old land castle of St. Louis, which is nearly two hundred feet above the level of the sea. The city itself is seen to the best advantage, however, from the villages on the foot-hills east of the gardens, from where nearly every house is visible.

Before we turn up to the right, among the gardens, I call your attention to the remains of that ancient wall, and to this sheltered beach, upon which some sailors are repairing their "ships." When the stormy season commences this space will be crowded with Sidon's dismantled fleet. It is the invariable custom to lay up those frail craft for the winter, and that has always been the practice along this coast, I suppose. The Phœnicians rarely had harbors where ships could ride in safety during the storms of winter, and hence they drew them up on shore. They could thus dispense with harbors, and could and did build towns along the coast, wherever there was a bit of sandy beach large enough for their vessels. When the spring opened they probably did just what these modern

mariners now do—re-pitched, launched, and rigged up their ships, and prosecuted their business until the next winter, when they again dismantled and hauled them on shore. The Greeks did the same even with their war-ships, and Homer's heroes built a fortification around their navy to protect it from the Trojans; and, indeed, Sidonian ships were there to aid the beleaguered city of Troy.

Instead of following the ordinary route along the shore to the mouth of the Auwaly, we will pass through the gardens to the bridge over that river. The ride is much pleasanter, and you will get a better idea of the extent and character of these celebrated gardens—the glory of Sidon, and the source of much of the wealth and prosperity of its present inhabitants.

We have seen nothing like them in this country except at Jaffa, and in many respects these are more beautiful and larger. Can



SIDON AND ITS GARDENS.

anything of the kind be richer or more delightful than those orange and lemon trees, loaded with golden fruit, single or in compact clusters, decked with leaves of liveliest green, and spangled all over with snow-white flowers of sweetest fragrance? With distance to lend enchantment, Sidon's fair daughters gliding through these verdant



EL MOUZ—THE BANANA.
EN NÂ'URAH—THE WATER-WHEEL.

bowers might pass for "ladies of the Hesperides," as Milton has it, set to watch those golden apples. Then these banana-trees, with their large bunches of green and ripe fruit, and their extraordinary leaves, a dozen feet long, and drooping like great pendent ears, are exceedingly picturesque.

Commerce has made all the world familiar with the fruit of that tree, but as it cannot endure the frost it is never seen in northern countries. Here there are thousands of them, and Sidon is justly celebrated for the quality as well as the quantity of its bananas.

The nâ'urah, or water-wheel, with its ropes of twisted myrtle

branches, its dripping buckets, its groaning well-sweep—to which a mule or a camel is harnessed—and its birkeh, or reservoir, into which the water raised from the well falls with monotonous splash, is almost exactly like those we saw at Jaffa.

To these gardens the inhabitants of Sidon come, and around those birkehs they sit and "kaiyef"—eat, drink, smoke, and make merry—especially in the spring and early summer, when the lettuce is fresh and crisp, or the apricots ripe and luscious.

When I resided in Sidon, many years ago, one of my favorite walks was along the aqueduct which brings the water from the Auwaly through the gardens and into the city. All this wilderness of fadeless verdure, this paradise of fruits and flowers, derives its life from that aqueduct; and from the many shallow wells which the gardeners dig. The aqueduct not being kept in good repair, a part of the city is deprived of any benefit from it, and a large quantity of water runs to waste in the gardens, and along the road, as we have found to our annoyance during most of this ride.

Here we are at Jisr el Auwaly, as this picturesque bridge is called. It is a fine stone structure, spanning the river by a single arch, and is said to have been built, more than two hundred and fifty years ago, by an Italian architect in the employ of the Emîr Fakhr ed Dîn, concerning whom we shall have more to say when we visit the region of that chief's exploits on Lebanon. The bridge occupies the site of one more ancient, erected by the Romans, or the Phœnicians, whose builders have left the marks of their handiwork on some of the large bevelled stones in the foundation. The Auwaly has been identified by Dr. Robinson with the Bostrenus of the ancient geographers, "described by Dionysius Periegetes as the 'graceful' river upon whose waters 'flowery' Sidon was situated, though it is actually two miles south of it."

How quietly the river glides, between these green and bushy banks, towards the sea! Is it so deep as to require a bridge?

Only during the stormy season in winter; but, as often happens to many other streams along this coast, the waves of the sea dam up their mouths, especially in the summer and autumn, when the current is too feeble to keep the channel open, and the ford is thus rendered almost impracticable.

Is it not surprising that bridges are not once mentioned in the Bible, not even in the New Testament, at which time there were at least Roman bridges in many parts of this country?

The Hebrews do not appear to have understood the art of bridge making. When they were commanded by Joshua "to pass



EL AUWALY—THE BOSTRENUS.

over Jordan," a way was miraculously opened for them—"the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap, and those that came down toward the sea, even the salt sea, failed and were cut off: and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground."[1] And so late as the reign of David, when he returned from Maha-

[1] Josh. iii. 16, 17.

naim to the Jordan, "there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household," which implies that there were then no bridges, and that the main body of his army forded the river.[1]

The Romans were the great bridge builders, and it was not till after the conquest of the country by them that bridges were erected. Not long before the birth of Christ, Herod the Great must have thrown across the Tyropœon that stupendous bridge, now familiarly known as "Robinson's Arch;" and farther up the valley the grand viaduct, "Wilson's Arch," was probably built about the same time, and by the same architects. Herod was a great builder of castles, temples, theatres, and other public edifices, and he, perhaps, constructed or repaired some of the bridges over the Jordan, whose ruins indicate a Roman origin.

I have passed more than one night at this old khân on our left, and the sight of it revives the memory of other days, and of curious personal experiences. On my way from Beirût to Hâsbeiya, many years ago, I arrived at this place about sunset. It was the 3d of December, and a winter-storm was coming on in all its might and majesty. Lightnings blazed along the mountain-tops, and loud thunder echoed through the wadys of the upper Auwaly. As evening deepened into night the wind began to moan amongst the rocks and trees, and volumes of black vapor, rolling in from the sea, settled on the heights of Lebanon like "a horror of great darkness." The long-expected and much-desired rains had commenced, and we were glad to take shelter in that dismal khân.

When the day dawned, for want of other amusement, I watched the migration of a tribe of Arabs which had been encamped on the mountains. They were evidently fleeing from some apprehended danger. Ragged boys and girls urged forward droves of cattle, as lean as Pharaoh's types of the seven years of famine; men, riding lank and shaggy mares, hurried onward the slow-paced camels, loaded with tents and the multifarious furniture of their camp; women staggered along with small children on their backs; old people were strapped fast on the loads; and the little babes up there, too, took the pelting rain as merrily as unfledged ducklings. Last of all came large flocks of sheep and goats, with their surly

[1] 2 Sam. xix. 18.

canine guards and insolent shepherds. Over the bridge rushed the whole caravan, as if the avenger of blood was behind them.

A circumstance which occurred the evening before explained the reason of that hasty migration. The chief of a troop of horsemen, a few miles back, had called on me and inquired if my companion could read Arabic, handing to him a letter which contained an order from Sa'îd Beg to capture all the men of a particular Arab encampment, as they were accused of robbing the house of a Maronite priest. The Arabs, however, had got the start of the officer, and by sunrise were on the south side of the Auwaly, and within the jurisdiction of the Governor of Sidon. I was amused at the way in which my companion reproved the sheikh, and, by implication, his master. It was thoroughly Arabic. "Why," said he, "can't the keeper of this khân read? No! Well, that's a pity. It would be better if every khânjy could read, and then it would not be necessary for an officer of Sa'îd Beg to show his letters to any chance traveller that comes along. They might contain things which ought not to be published. I would advise the Beg not to rent any of these khâns to one who can't read." "Why," said I, "not tell the officer himself that it was a shame for one in his station not to know how to read?" "What! and insult the officer of Sa'îd Beg? Of course, that is what I meant, and he understood it; but it would never do to say all that to his beard."

Though it rained hard, I pursued my journey to Hâsbeiya, for I had no desire to repeat the experiment of the past night in that way-side inn. Our host, with his cats and kittens, his barley and straw, bread and olives, leben and oil, and every other article of his trade, shared with us, and our saddles, baggage, and beds, this one low, dark vault. A few burning brands, or brands that would not burn, enabled us, with a great deal of persuasion, to boil a little water for tea, with no more serious penalty than that of being nearly blinded by a cloud of pungent smoke. The privacy of our apartment was farther invaded by a native bridal-party, who appeared determined, bride and all, to share with us the privileges of our smoky vault. They kept up a violent row with our host until a late hour, when, buying a few piastres' worth of bread, they kindled a fire in that field on the other side of the road, and, huddling

round it, kept up a dismal concert, singing, shouting, and clapping hands, until morning, when, cold, wet, and woe-begone, they set off to find the bishop, not, as it appeared, to be married, but to get unmarried. The young lady had been betrothed, nolens volens, to a man she did not like, and was now, with her friends, going to get his lordship to cancel the espousals.

It is about twenty-seven miles from Sidon to Beirût, and, owing to the character of the road, it will take nearly eight hours of weary plodding to accomplish that distance. The ride is one of the least interesting and most tedious in the country. The traveller winds along the beach with the noisy surf dashing over the horses' feet and his own, to the discomfort of both; or he flounders over rocky headlands, or wades through leagues of deep sand. And to pass from one to another of these annoyances in tiresome succession is the wayfarer's only relief. The sea never wearies, and with a monotony that varies not wave chases wave towards the shore; then hesitates, raises its crest and plunges forward, striking the shore with a heavy thud, and sending the quivering, feathery foam far up the sandy beach. In the clear light of a midsummer moon this ride is not without its charms; but even then utter solitude saddens, ceaseless repetition wearies, and one rejoices to escape from the deafening "plunge of the implacable sea" into the narrow alleys and sombre pine groves in the suburbs of Beirût.

The residence of Lady Hester Stanhope was somewhere on these mountains, above our road, was it not?

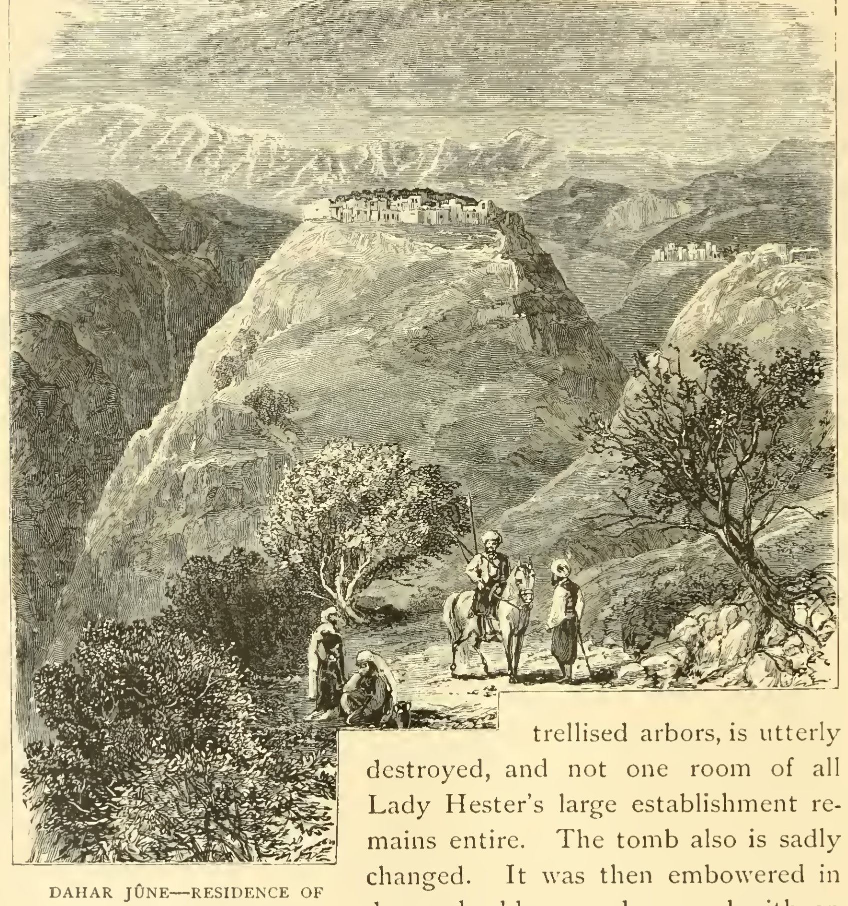
A ride of two hours to the north-east would bring us to Dahar Jûne, a high conical mount, on whose breezy summit her ladyship lived; and there she died and was buried.

It would have been an interesting episode in our day's travel to have seen the place of her residence and to have visited her tomb.

The history of that place is peculiar. It belonged to a wealthy Christian of Damascus, who built the original house, to which Lady Hester added some twenty-five or thirty rooms. At his death, soon after that of Lady Hester, the property was left to an only son, who quickly dissipated it. He then turned Moslem, and finally hung himself in a neighboring house. His Moslem wife, fearing that the Christians would one day deprive her of the place, tore down the

buildings, and sold the material to the people of Jûne. Thus the destruction has been intentional, rapid, and complete.

A melancholy change has come over the scene since I first visited it. The garden, with its choice flowers, its shaded walks, and trellised arbors, is utterly destroyed, and not one room of all Lady Hester's large establishment remains entire. The tomb also is sadly changed. It was then embowered in dense shrubbery, and covered with an arbor of running roses, not a vestige of which now remains, and the stones of the vault itself are broken and displaced. There is no inscription—not a word in any language—and unless some measures are adopted for its protection the last resting-place of her ladyship will soon be entirely lost.



DAHAR JÛNE—RESIDENCE OF LADY HESTER STANHOPE.

The British consul at Beirût requested me to perform the reli-

gious services at the burial of Lady Hester. It was an intensely hot Sabbath in June, 1839. We started on our melancholy errand at one o'clock, and reached the place about midnight. After a brief examination, the consul decided that the funeral should take place at once. The vault in the garden was hastily opened, and the bones of a French general who died there, and was buried by her ladyship in the vault, were taken out and placed at its head.

The body, in a plain deal box, was carried by the servants to the grave, followed by a mixed company, with torches and lanterns, to enable them to thread their way through the winding alleys of



GRAVE OF LADY HESTER STANHOPE.

the garden. I took a wrong path, and wandered some time in the mazes of those labyrinths. When at length I entered the arbor the first thing I saw were the bones of the general, in a ghastly heap, with the head on the top, having a lighted taper in either eye-socket—a hideous spectacle. It was difficult to proceed with the service under such circumstances. The consul afterwards remarked that there were some curious coincidences between that and the burial of Sir John Moore, her ladyship's early love. In silence, on the lone mountain at midnight, "our lanterns dimly burning," with the flag of her country around her, she "lay like a warrior taking his rest," and we left her alone in her glory. There was but one of her own nation present, and his name was Moore.

The morning after the funeral the consul and I went round the

premises, and examined thirty-five rooms, which had been sealed up by the vice-consul of Sidon to prevent robbery. One had forty or fifty oil-jars of French manufacture, old, empty, and dusty. Another was filled with Arab saddles, moth-eaten, tattered, and torn. They had belonged to her mounted guard. Superannuated pipe-stems without bowls were in one room. Two more rooms were devoted to medicines; and one to books and papers, mostly in boxes and ancient chests. Nothing of much value was found anywhere, and the seals were replaced, to await legal action. The crowd of servants and greedy retainers had appropriated to themselves her most valuable effects.

She told an acquaintance that once, when she was supposed to be dying of the plague, she could hear the servants breaking open chests, and ripping off the embroidered covers of cushions. "Oh! didn't I vow," said she, "that if I recovered I would make a scattering among them!" and she performed her vow. But each succeeding set, like the flies in the fable of the fox, were as greedy as their predecessors; and when she died nothing valuable escaped their rapacity. What a death! Without a European attendant—without a friend—alone, on the top of a bleak mountain, her lamp of life grew dimmer and dimmer, until it went quite out in rayless night. Such was the end of the once gay and brilliant niece of Pitt, presiding in the saloons of the master-spirit of Europe, and familiar with the intrigues of kings and cabinets.

On most subjects Lady Hester was not merely sane, but well-informed and extremely shrewd. She possessed great powers of conversation, and was quite fascinating when she chose to make herself agreeable. With Mr. Abbott, then the British consul, and his lady she would sit talking long into the night over the stirring times of the last century and those of the present with inexhaustless spirit and keen delight. But nothing could tempt her back to England. At length her income was greatly reduced by cancelling numerous debts. But she was unsubdued; and alone in her mountain retreat she spent the remnant of her days in haughty pride and stubborn independence.

She was wholly unique. Bold as a lion, she wore the costume of an emîr, weapons, pipe, and all; nor did she fail to rule her servants

and her Albanian guards with absolute authority. Now riding at the head of the Bedawîn Arabs, queen of the desert, on a visit to Palmyra; now intriguing with venal pashas and cunning emîrs; at one time treating with contempt nobles, generals, and consuls, bidding defiance to law, and thrashing the officers sent to her lodge; at another eluding or confounding her creditors; to-day charitable and kind to the poor, to-morrow oppressive, selfish, and tyrannical in the extreme. She kept spies in the principal cities and at the residences of pashas and emîrs, and knew all that was going on in the country. Her garden of several acres was walled round like a fort; and crowning the top of the conical hill, with deep wadys on all sides, its appearance from a distance was quite imposing. But the site was badly chosen; the water was distant, far below, and had to be carried up on mules. She, however, had the English taste for beautiful grounds, and spared neither time, labor, nor expense to convert that barren hill into a maze of shady avenues and a paradise of sweet flowers.

There was no limit to her eccentricities. In some things she was a devout believer—an unbeliever in many. She read the stars, and calculated nativities and claimed the gift of second-sight, by which she pretended to foretell coming events. She practised alchemy, and in pursuit of that vain science was often closeted with strange companions. She had a mare whose backbone sank suddenly down at the shoulders and rose abruptly near the haunches. That deformity her vivid imagination converted into a miraculous saddle, on which she was to ride into Jerusalem as queen by the side of some Messiah, who was to introduce a fancied millennium. Another mare had a part to play in that august pageant, and both were tended with extraordinary care. A lamp was kept burning in their comfortable stables, and they were served with sherbet and other delicacies. Nothing about the premises so excited my compassion as those poor pampered animals, upon which Lady Hester had lavished her affection for the last fourteen years. They were soon after sold at auction, when hard work and low living quickly terminated their miserable existence.

Lady Hester was a doctor, and most positive in her prescriptions to herself, her servants, her horses, and even to her chickens,

and often did serious mischief to all her patients. She had many whimsical tests of character both for man and beast, and, of course, was often deceived by both to her cost. She could be extremely sarcastic, and the margins of some books which I purchased at the auction were "illuminated" with her caustic criticisms.

Such was Lady Hester in her mountain retreat on Lebanon. Alas! she must have drained to the dregs many a bitter cup. Her sturdy spirit there fought out alone a thousand desperate battles, and lost them all. Let those who are tempted to revolt against society, and war with nature, God, and man, come to Dahar Jûne—sit and moralize on the fragments of that broken tomb, amidst ruins without beauty to charm, or age to make venerable—itself a ruin of yesterday, and fast sinking into oblivion. Will such a melancholy end compensate for such an erratic life?

What is that low building on our right, which we are now passing, with its white dome and tall cypress-tree?



NEBY YÛNAS—TOMB OF JONAH.

Neby Yûnas, one of the many shrines dedicated to the prophet Jonah. The mukâm en Neby, sanctuary of the prophet, is in that room with the white dome over it. The arched building north of it is an ordinary way-side inn, so numerous along this coast, having a covered portico in front, back of which are rooms for native travellers, and stables for their animals. In former times Neby Yûnas was much frequented by Moslems, and Druses from the mountains, especially by Druse sittât, or princesses, who came with their sorrows, their prayers, and their vows, for the same blessing which the mother of Samuel sought "in bitterness of soul" to obtain at Shiloh.[1] The vows of some are made in times of sickness, either of their friends or themselves, and they come here from all parts of the country to fulfil them upon their recovery.

I have repeatedly pitched my tent on the smooth sandy terrace east of that mukâm, and have seen more than one group of "horned ladies" resort to the shrine of the prophet to obtain the intercession of the Neby in their behalf, and to fulfil vows which they had made. But such companies are rarely seen now; the progress of civilization, and the general spread of education in this country, have robbed the prophet of much of his prestige and patronage, and his shrine is now almost deserted.

Do you imagine that such horns have any connection with those so often alluded to in the Bible?

No. These tantûrs grew, like other horns, from small beginnings and by slow degrees, and pride nourished them. At first they were merely designed to finish off the head-dress, so as to raise the veil a little from the face. Specimens of that primitive kind are still found in remote and semi-civilized districts. I have seen them only a few inches long, made even of common pottery. By degrees the more fashionable ladies used tin, and lengthened them; then rivalry made them of silver, and still farther prolonged and ornamented them; until finally the princesses of Lebanon and Hermon wore horns of silver and gold, decked with jewels, and so long—some nearly eighteen inches—that a servant had to spread the veil over them. But the day for those most preposterous appendages to the female head has passed away. After the wars between

[1] 1 Sam. i. 10, 11.

the Maronites and Druses in 1841 and 1845, the Maronite clergy thundered their excommunications against them, and very few Christians now wear them. Even the Druse women have cast them off, and the "horn," or tantûr, has entirely disappeared from the land, and given place to modern fashions, more convenient, perhaps, though far less picturesque.

I do not suppose that horns like these were worn by the Jews, nor, indeed, by any nation of such antiquity. So remarkable an article of dress, had it been in existence, would certainly have been noticed by authors who enter so minutely into such matters as many did. The horns of animals, where the Creator alone planted them, were their weapons of defence; and man, who lays all nature under tribute to enrich his store of images and figures, very early made them synonymous with power, and then for what that will always confer upon the possessor. To exalt the horn, an expression often occurring in the poetic and prophetic parts of the Bible, means to advance in power, honor, and dominion. To defile it in the dust is a figure drawn from the condition of a dying ox or stag, who literally defiles his horn in dust, mingled with his own blood. It is painfully significant of defeat, disgrace, and death, and for a prince like Job it was to be dishonored and utterly overthrown.[1]

It is not certainly known why the corners of altars were finished off like horns. Several purposes may have been attained by that custom. Such horns were probably intended to symbolize the majesty and power of the being in whose honor the altar was reared, and to whom the sacrifice was offered; or the design may have been suggested by the horns of the victims to be slain. As altars early became sanctuaries, it was natural that the suppliant should lay hold of the horns. In fact, there was often nothing else about them which he could grasp with his hand. That natural, significant, and very expressive act is often mentioned in the Bible.

The custom of making vows seems to have been prevalent in this country from the earliest times. Thus the devout Psalmist says: "I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble."[2] This he repeats in the one hundred and sixteenth Psalm, with the addition that he

[1] Job xvi. 15. [2] Psa. lxvi. 13, 14.

DRUSE PRINCESSES FROM MOUNT LEBANON.



would do so "in the presence of all his people," and, also, that he would offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving "in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem."[1]

Yes, and long before the time of the Psalmist, Jacob vowed a vow at Bethel, as you remember, which reads very like one of those carefully conditioned contracts, in the drawing up of which his descendants have always been so celebrated. Doubtless the custom was far older than the time of Jacob, and it was continued down to that of Paul, who shaved his "head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow," which necessitated the most disastrous journey he ever made; ensnared him into an ostensible compliance with abrogated rights, difficult to justify; depriving him of liberty; nearly cost him his life, and ultimately sent him, through storm and shipwreck, a prisoner in chains to Rome, there to die. There can be no objection to vows, when made to the proper person, for things lawful and right, and faithfully performed. But few of the vows in this country conform to the conditions above stated. They are not made directly to God, but to saints or to their shrines.

That is true of every Christian sect in the land; and, what is very surprising, many non-Christians make vows and pilgrimages to Christian shrines. The large convent of Mâr Jirjis el Humeira, St. George, near Kŭl'at el Hŭsn, is largely enriched by the vows of the semi-pagan Nusairîyeh. The Druses, also, who are half atheists, still pay their vows at the shrines of reputed saints, as we have just seen at Neby Yûnas. I once saw a large gathering of Bedawîn Arabs at Neby Sâfy, south-east of Sidon, slaughtering victims and performing vows which they had made while in the desert east of the Jordan. In every case such vows are not to God, but to departed beings, real or fictitious, whose spirits are supposed to frequent certain consecrated shrines. This at once draws a broad line of distinction between vows made by the natives of this country at the present day and those which were sanctioned by Moses, and practised by the people of God in ancient times.

How do you suppose that the name and the story of Jonah came to be attached to this locality?

It is possible that in some former age a whale was driven ashore

[1] Psa. cxvi. 18, 19.

during one of the wild storms which prevail along this coast in winter, as happened quite recently not far from Tyre, and something in the attending circumstances may have suggested the experience of that prophet to the people in the neighborhood. Superstition would speedily render the site sacred, and in due time a shrine would be erected to confirm the faith of those who resorted to it. There are many mukâms with white-domed vaults all over this Eastern land whose origin is shrouded in equal uncertainty. Not a few of them are evidently ancient; but when and through what means they were established is now unknown.

This part of the coast seems to be entirely deserted; there is not a human habitation in sight.

On the narrow plain east of the khân there are a few houses, and upon the hills above are several villages. One called Berja is celebrated for the sweetest and purest olive-oil in this region—a fact of much importance to the Greeks and Maronites, who are restricted to the use of oil in cooking during their stringent fasts.

In the Jerusalem Itinerary, Porphyreon is located in this neighborhood, and the sand hillocks that extend for some distance north of the khân, towards the village of el Jîyeh, probably cover the remains of that ancient town. Twenty years ago I saw men digging out old building-stones in various places along those sand hills, and shipping them to Beirût, to meet the extraordinary demand in that city for such durable material.

Though abandoned by civilized people, or because thus forsaken, this neighborhood is frequented by remnants of Arab tribes, and there is a group of their tents, and a number of women and children watering their flocks at that well. We will soon be surrounded by them, clamoring for bakhshîsh, and urging us to drink out of their water-bottles.

They are apparently amongst the very poorest and most degraded of their race. Their very donkeys and dogs are lean and lank, and seem to be pinched up with hunger.

They are by no means so poverty-smitten as their appearance would indicate, and you may with a safe conscience button up your pocket and spare your pity. Not only are they importunate beggars, but cunning thieves also; for when passing this way, on a for-

mer occasion, one of those degenerate Bedawîn stole our water-bottle from which he had just slaked his own real or pretended thirst.

The desire for personal adornment has prompted these women to tattoo themselves most profusely—forehead, face, lips, chin, chest, arms, hands, and even their feet, with the rude designs and curious figures of that most ancient art.



TATTOOED EGYPTIAN WOMAN.



SPECIMENS OF TATTOOING.

The effect is anything but agreeable to our taste, yet Orientals have a passion for it. The practice of marking religious signs and tokens upon the hands and the arms is almost universal amongst the Arabs, of all sects and classes. The Christian pilgrim to Jerusalem has the operation performed there, as it is the most holy place known to his religion. I have watched the process of tattooing, and it is not a little painful. A number of common needles are bound together in the shape of the desired figure, or so that the design can be marked out with sufficient exactness. The skin being punctured in the required pattern, certain mixtures of coloring matter are rubbed in, and the place bound with a tight bandage. Gunpowder, variously prepared, is commonly employed, and it is

that which gives to the tattooing of these Bedawîn its bluish tinge. Mr. Lane tells us that in Egypt, where this singular custom is very general, smoke-black mixed with milk is used, and subsequently a paste of fresh-pounded leaves of clover, or white beet, is applied, so as to give a blue color to the marks.

It is now well ascertained that tattooing prevailed in Egypt even before the time of Moses. In Leviticus the Hebrews were forbidden not only to make any "cuttings" in their flesh for the dead, but also to "print" any marks upon themselves.[1] No doubt those cuttings and prints had an idolatrous signification which Moses desired to condemn. The allusions in Revelation to religious marks are too numerous to be specified. Isaiah, however, has an impressive reference to them, which we may quote, to strengthen our trust in the watchful providence of our heavenly Father: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."[2] As to these Arabs, whose blue markings started us off upon this digression, we shall have many occasions to notice their strange ways and singular customs when we go amongst them, in their special domain east of the Jordan. Those dingy black objects peeping out of the bushes on the mountain-side are their tents, and they are found spread over the whole country, from Egypt to Mount Taurus.

This is indeed a tantalizing and wearisome ride. Plodding through the deep sand along the shore one longs for the rocky pathway over the headland; but once there the ceaseless clatter of our iron-shod horses, as they slip, slide, and stumble along on the smooth stones, makes one quite nervous.

We shall soon escape from Nŭkkâr es S'adiât, as this low promontory is called. Here, it is supposed, Antiochus the Great defeated the army of Ptolemy, commanded by his general, Nicolaus. This nŭkkâr is well adapted to be the scene of bloody tragedies, being a difficult pass over one of "the roots of Lebanon," thrust out into the sea and ending there—a strong military position, especially as against an enemy marching from the north.

[1] Levit. xix. 28.

[2] Isa. xlix. 15, 16.

And now for a gallop over this stretch of sand to the river Dâmûr, where we will rest for half an hour and take our lunch.

There is something worth seeing. That shepherd is about to lead his flock through the river; and—as our Lord says of the good shepherd—"he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow."[1]

They follow, but not all in the same manner. Some enter boldly, and come straight across. Those are the favored ones



ED DÂMÛR—THE TAMYRAS.

of the flock, who keep hard by the footsteps of the shepherd through green meadows, by the still waters, feeding upon the mountains, or resting at noon beneath the shadow of great rocks. And now others enter, but in doubt and alarm. Far from their guide, they miss the ford, and are carried down the river, some farther than others, yet, one by one, they struggle over and make a safe

[1] John x. 4.

landing. Notice those little lambs. They refuse to enter, and must be driven into the stream by the shepherd's dog, mentioned by Job in his "parable." Poor things! how they leap, and plunge, and bleat in terror! That weak one will be swept quite away, and perish in the sea. But the shepherd himself leaps into the stream, lifts it into his bosom, and bears it trembling to the shore. All now are safely over, and how happy they appear! The lambs frisk and gambol about, while the older ones gather round their faithful shepherd, and look up to him in subdued but expressive thankfulness.

Can you watch such a scene, and not think of that Shepherd who leadeth Joseph like a flock, and of another river which all his sheep must cross? He, too, goes before, and, as in the case of this flock, they who keep near him fear no evil. They hear his encouraging voice saying, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."[1] With their eyes fastened on him, they scarcely heed the stream, or feel its cold and threatening current. The majority, however, "linger, shivering on the brink, and fear to launch away." They lag behind, look down upon the dark river, and, like Peter on stormy Gennesaret, when faith fails, they begin to sink. Then they cry for help, and not in vain. The good Shepherd hastens to their rescue, and none of all his flock ever perish. Even the weakest lambkins are carried safely over. I once saw flocks crossing the Jordan "to Canaan's fair and happy land," and there the scene was even more striking and impressive. The river was broader, the current stronger, and the flocks larger, while the shepherds were more picturesque and their occupation more Biblical. The danger, too, with which many poor sheep were threatened — of being swept down into that mysterious Sea of Death which swallows up the Jordan itself—was more certain and suggestive.

This name, Dâmûr, is a mere variation of the Tamyras of Strabo, the Damouras of Polybius, I suppose.

Yes, if the variation is not that of the Greeks and Romans, probably Dâmûr is nearer the original name. The main source of this river is near 'Ain Zahelteh, a village five hours to the east, upon the lofty range of Lebanon. Other streams from the north unite

[1] Isa. xliii. 2.

with it at Jisr el Kâdy, on the road from Beirût to Deir el Kamar. Below that the river turns to the south-west, and enters the sea just south of the long, straggling village of Mu'allakah. Though not more than twenty-five miles long, yet, from the extent of those high mountains which pour down their floods into its channel, the Dâmûr rises suddenly in winter, and becomes a turbulent, unfordable river. Men and animals have been carried off by it and perished at the ford, or were swept away into the sea.

That broken bridge was built by the Emîr Beshîr Shehâb, some sixty years ago, but it soon gave way before the violence of the stream. The emîr erected his on the ruins of one more ancient, built probably by the Romans, and with no better success than they. The river frequently changes its channel, and though a heavy wall was built running up the stream to confine it to its proper bed, still in winter it sets all bounds at defiance. During great floods it spreads through these gardens, tears up the mulberry-trees, and carries them down to the sea. The scenery around the head of this river is not so wild as in many other places; but the basins of the different tributaries open out prospects which, when surveyed from the lofty declivities of Lebanon, are rarely surpassed for depth, breadth, vastness, and variety. The view from Mûtyar Abeih is particularly impressive.

To escape the deep sand between this and Khân Khulda we will pass up the river for a short distance, and then ride through the mulberry gardens of Mu'allakah.

They appear to be quite extensive, but the branches of the trees have all been cut off, leaving only the glaring and bare trunks, some eight or ten feet high.

The silk-growers adopt that method in order that the young branches may grow during the summer. They say that next spring the leaves of those branches will contain more glutinous matter—from which substance the silk-worms spin their cocoons—than is found in the leaves growing upon the old branches.

I noticed hedges of the ordinary reed cane near the river and along the water-courses, and here are fields of genuine sugar-cane.

It is said that the sugar-cane was originally taken from this coast to Europe during the Crusades; and, after America was dis-

covered the Spaniards carried it to the West Indies, from where it was introduced into the Southern States. The people of this country, however, do not make any sugar; but during the season the cane is cut and taken in large bundles to the cities, where it is sold, mostly to the lower classes, and especially to children, who chew the stem for its sweet juice—hence its name, Kŭssab Muss.

Is this "the sweet cane from a far country" mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah?[1]

The sweetness was, probably, not that of taste, but of smell, and may have had reference to the aromatic properties of some root, plant, or leaf, possibly from Arabia or India. The sugar-cane, being a perishable article, could not have been brought as a luxury from a far country, since it would have withered and decayed on the way, and have lost all its sweetness.

For what purpose are those people cutting up the thorn-bushes amongst the rocks, with their mattocks and hand scythes, and gathering them together into such large bundles?

To be burnt as fuel in that lime-kiln. We have there a striking illustration of a passage in Isaiah: "And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire."[2] This picture from real life is in curious fidelity with the scene depicted by the prophet, for when the thorns are merely to be destroyed they are not "cut up," but set on fire where they grow, to clear the ground for the plough.

Does that passage in Isaiah to which you have just referred contain the earliest mention of lime in the Bible?

The Hebrews were acquainted with lime and its uses in very early times. Moses directs the people of Israel, when they "pass over Jordan," to "set up great stones, and plaister them with plaister."[3] The word in the Hebrew is the same as that translated lime in Isaiah, and also in Amos ii. 1, the only places in the Bible where lime is mentioned—a fact somewhat remarkable, considering the importance of that article, and the many and varied purposes to which it was applied from remote antiquity. And not only was lime itself known from ancient times, but the kiln and the fuel to burn it with were very much like these we have before us.

[1] Jer. vi. 20. [2] Isa. xxxiii. 12. [3] Deut. xxvii. 2.

This kind of thorn seems to cover the entire face of the mountain. What is the name of it?

It is the Poterium spinosum of the botanist. The Arabs call it bellân, and it abounds in almost every part of Syria and Palestine, and is also to be found in the Wilderness of the Wandering.

Is it ever mentioned specifically in the Bible?

Not by its modern Arabic name; but these thorns are so omnipresent and obtrusive that they could not have escaped notice, and I suppose they are the same as those, to which "David in his last words" likened "the sons of Belial," which are "as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands: but the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place."[1] The Arabic translation is more specific: "The sons of Belial are all like thorns thrust aside, for they cannot be taken by the hand; and the man who would touch them must be armed with iron and the staff of a spear. And they shall be burned in the fire in their place." This description applies perfectly to the bellân. Those men first tear them loose from the rocks with their iron mattocks and scythes, and then thrust them away into heaps with a long forked stick. When the purpose is merely to clear the ground for ploughing and sowing the grain, they are simply set fire to on a windy day and "burned in their place."

David, in the fifty-eighth Psalm, has a curious allusion to thorns. Concerning the wicked, who "go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies," he says: "Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath."[2] Is the allusion there also to this bellân?

The poetical figure in that passage is tangled somewhat, like the bellân itself, but the reference is to cooking in pots by kindling fires under them, possibly with this thorn-bush. I have often watched the operation with much interest. These thorns burn with a sudden and intensely hot blaze, but that very vehemence often creates a little whirlwind which whisks the flame from the blazing bush into the air, so that the pots do not "feel the thorns" at all. As suddenly as the wind catches up in its wings the flame of the burn-

[1] 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7. [2] Psa. lviii. 3, 9.

ing bushes, so suddenly shall the whirlwind of divine indignation drive away those incorrigible sinners.

Dr. Alexander has some curious remarks in his exposition of the latter part of that passage. "Both living and in his wrath" he translates "whether raw or done," meaning that whether the flesh which is in the pot is cooked or is raw, he will blow it or them away. The Arabic translation reads thus: "Before that your pots feel the thorns, whether raw or burnt, he will scoop them away." In either case the essential elements in the figure are retained, and some of the obscurities are aptly illustrated by the ephemeral flames of the bellân under the pots of Arab peasants.

The complicated figure in that passage will bear even farther illustration. There is no proverbial metaphor more familiar to Arab ears than one which compares secret plots and machinations to a covered pot on a fire. To intimate that the plot is brewing they say, with a knowing shake of the head, "the pot is boiling," or simply, "it is boiling." Now, the pot is the representative of dark and treacherous schemes; those who kindle the fire and sit round watching it are the wicked plotters, and the Psalmist says that ere the pot can feel the flame, and while the schemes they are concocting are still immature or raw, the Lord in his indignation will blow out and away both the plot and the plotters. David had, no doubt, often seen during his shepherd boyhood, and his exile life and wanderings, all the circumstances which suggested the complicated figure in that ninth verse of his psalm. To understand it perfectly one must actually witness the process of cooking in the open country—a pot or pan placed upon two or three stones, bellân thorns ignited under it; the blaze flashing up fiercely, creating or increasing the wind which whirls and whisks the flame into the air, and the meat thus left half raw, half burnt, to the utter disgust and disappointment of both cook and expectant guests. So will it be with those sons of Belial—their plot defeated and blown away, and they with it, to utter destruction.

In "the words of the Preacher," "the laughter of the fool" is compared to "the crackling of thorns under a pot."[1]

Yes, the laughter of a fool he rightly calls "vanity"—mocking,

[1] Eccles. i. 1; vii. 6.

tantalizing, and annoying—just like the blaze of the bellân which flashes up in the face, burns the hands, blinds the eyes, and dies out suddenly before the pot can feel the heat. The ephemeral character of the blazing bellân is alluded to by the Psalmist when he says of his enemies, "They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns."[1]

The name of this way-side inn, on the left, which we are now approaching is Khân Khulda, and it probably occupies the site of Mutatio Heldua, an unimportant place mentioned in the Jerusalem Itinerary about the fourth century of our era as twelve Roman miles south of Beirût. There is another khân, below the gardens of Mu'allakah, and about a mile south of this one, called Ghŭfr en

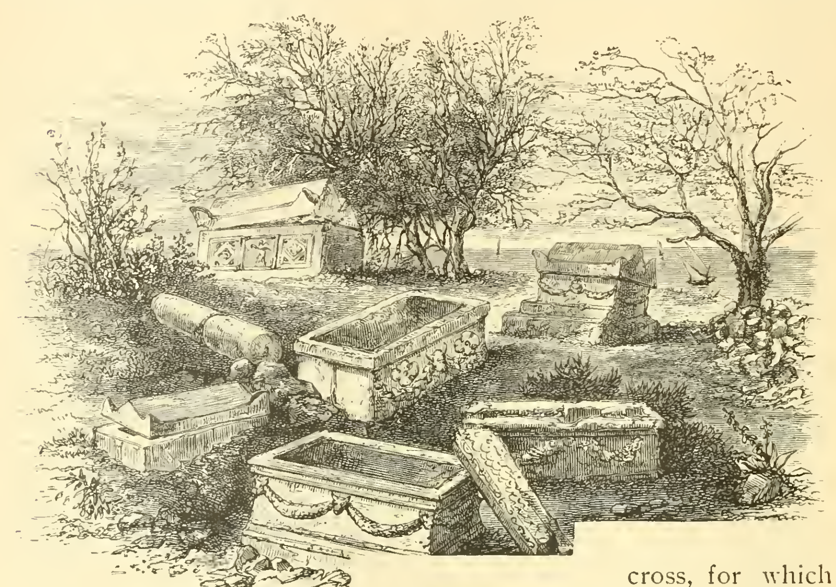


ONE OF ST. HELENA'S TOWERS NEAR TYRE.

Nâ'imeh, which may mark the site of Heldua. However that may be, there are at this place some old foundations and remains of antiquity which we should not pass by without visiting.

[1] Psa. cxviii. 12.

The débris on the top of that half-natural, half-artificial mound marks the site of one of those signal stations or beacons which St. Helena built along the road from Jerusalem to Constantinople, to convey to her royal son the first tidings of the discovery of the true



ANCIENT SARCOPHAGI.

cross, for which she was then searching in the rubbish of the Holy City. More probably it was one of a system of watch-towers for the defence of the coast, such as are still in use along the shores of Spain and Algiers. Marc Antony spent some time at a fort between Beirût and Sidon, called Dukekome, waiting for Cleopatra. Perhaps this tower-crowned hill marks the spot where those mighty revellers met and feasted. I remember when the tower was destroyed to supply the demand for building material in Beirût.

The most remarkable relics of past ages are those broken sarcophagi on the side of the mountain. Their number is surprising, since for ages the inhabitants have been breaking them up for building-stone, or burning them into lime. They are of all sizes: some eight feet long, and in fair proportion, the resting-place of giants; others were made for small children. Many are hewn in the live rock; others are single coffins cut out of separate blocks.

All had heavy lids, of various shapes, but with the corners raised. On one is a cherub with wings expanded, as if about to fly away to the "better land;" another has a palm branch, emblem of immortality; a large one has three warlike figures, the chosen companions, perhaps, of some ancient hero. They are without inscriptions, and have nothing about them to determine their age or origin; and on none of them is there a single mark or scratch which might indicate that those who made them had an alphabet. They are, no doubt, very ancient. Lift the lid, and the dust within differs not from the surrounding soil from which grows the corn of the current year. And so it was twenty centuries ago, I suppose.

From Khân Khulda to Beirût is about three hours, and, as the road leaves the sea-coast and follows the border of this little plain, the scene is varied and the ride becomes more interesting.

What a large village that is on the foot-hills east of us!

It is esh Shuweifât, one of the most important towns on Lebanon, and its prosperity is mainly due to the extensive olive-groves below and north of it—the largest in the country. This sand desert, on our left, interposed between those olive-groves and the sea, extends northward quite to the suburbs of Beirût.

That forest of olive-trees naturally attracts one's thoughts to them, and to the many Biblical references to the olive, some of which I do not yet fully comprehend. Thus Hosea says, "His beauty shall be as the olive tree."[1] It is more picturesque than beautiful, but perhaps the eye needs to be educated before it can distinguish properly and decide correctly.

The olive-tree and its fruit make the face of man to shine in more senses than one, and this noble grove, spreading like a silver sea over the plain and along the base of the hills, and rolling far up their ascending terraces, is beautiful; and it speaks of peace and plenty, food and gladness. To a stranger it is destitute of pleasing associations; but to me it is delightful and refreshing to ride through it, especially when the trees are bowed down with purple berries, or when the ground is covered with flowers.

Moses, in that last ode which he taught the children of Israel, speaks of "oil out of the flinty rock;" and I had supposed that the

[1] Hos. xiv. 6.

tree delighted in hard, rocky soil; but this vast grove spreads over a soft and sandy plain.[1]

You were not mistaken—only misled by appearances. The substratum of this plain is chalky marl, abounding in flint, and the sand is merely an intruder blown in from this desert on our left. The olive is found, also, in places where there is no rocky basis; but it is in soil such as this that the tree flourishes best, both in the plains and upon the mountains. It insinuates its roots into the crevices of this flinty marl, and draws from thence its stores of oil. If the overlying earth is so deep that its roots cannot reach the rock beneath, I am told that the tree languishes, and its berries are small and sapless. There is, however, another explanation of that figure of Moses. In ancient times generally—and in some places at the present day—the olives were ground to a pulp in large stone basins, by rolling a heavy stone wheel over them, and the oil was then expressed in stone presses established near by. Frequently those presses, with their floors, gutters, troughs, and cisterns, were all hewn out of solid rock, and thus literally "the rock poured out rivers of oil," as Job affirms in his parable.[2]

I notice that the branches of some trees have been cut off, and then grafted; why is that done?

The olive, in its natural wild state, bears no berries, or but few, and those small and destitute of oil.

St. Paul has an extended reference to grafting. He says: "If some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." And then, in the twenty-fourth verse: "For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree,"[3] etc. The olive, says the apostle—and so you say—is wild by nature, and it must be grafted by the good before it will bear fruit; but the apostle speaks of grafting the wild into the good, not the good upon the wild.

True; but observe, he expressly states that this is "contrary to nature," as it really is. In the kingdom of nature generally, cer-

[1] Deut. xxxii. 13. [2] Job xxix. 6. [3] Rom. xi. 17, 18, 24.

tainly in the case of the olive, the process referred to by the apostle never succeeds. Graft the good upon the wild, and, as the Arabs say, "it will conquer the wild," but you cannot reverse the process with success. If you insert a wild graft into a good tree, it will conquer the good. It is only in the kingdom of grace that a process thus contrary to nature can be successful; and it is this circumstance which the apostle has seized upon to magnify the mercy shown to the Gentiles by grafting them, a wild race, contrary to the nature of such operations, into the good olive-tree of the Church, and causing them to flourish there, and bring forth fruit unto eternal life. The apostle lived in the land of the olive, and was in no danger of falling into a blunder in founding his argument upon such a circumstance in its cultivation.

But have all the trees in this vast grove of esh Shuweifât been reclaimed from a wild state by grafting?

Certainly not. The apostle himself speaks of the root of the good olive, implying that, by some means or other, it had been changed. As explained by the natives, the process by which that result is reached is quite simple. There are knobs, or large warts, so to speak, on the body of the trees. Cut off one of those which has a branch growing out of it, above the place where it has been grafted; plant it in good soil, water it carefully, and it will strike out roots and grow. It is now a good tree from the root, and all scions taken from it are also good by nature. But if the knob be taken below the grafting, the tree grows wild again. The greater part of this grove is now "good" from the root. I am told, however, that there is a tendency to degenerate, and that it is often an improvement to graft even "a good olive tree" with one that is still better.

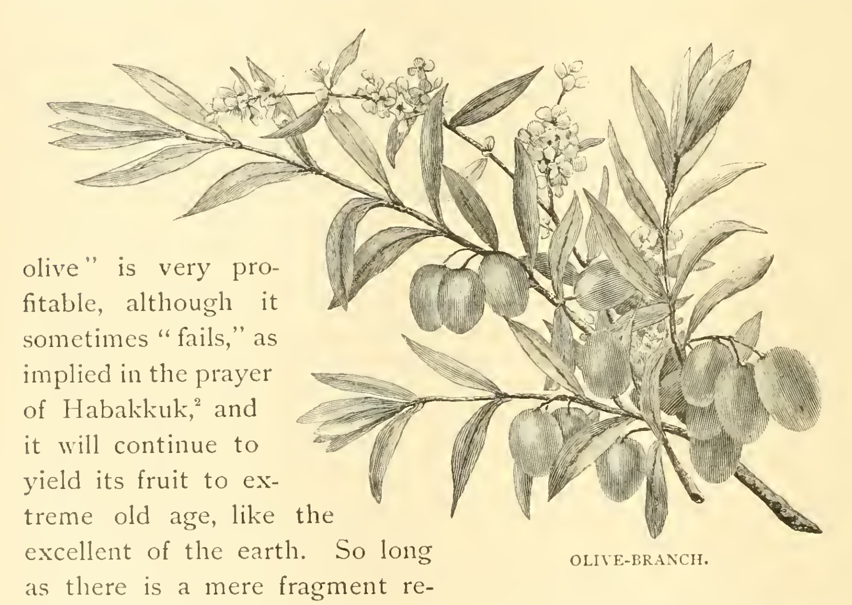
Eliphaz says of the wicked man, "He shall cast off his flower as the olive."[1] What is there in the casting off of olive-flowers which can illustrate the rejection and ruin of those who trust in vanity, for which purpose the figure was employed?

The olive is the most prodigal of all fruit-bearing trees in flowers. It bends under the weight of them. But then not one in a hundred comes to maturity. The tree casts them off as if they were of no more value than flakes of snow, which they closely

[1] Job xv. 33.

resemble. So it will be with those who put their trust in vanity: "for vanity shall be their recompense. They shall be cut off before their time, and their branch shall not be green."[1] Cast off, they disappear, and no one asks after them; so the olive seems to throw off in contempt the flowers that signify nothing, and turns all its fatness to those which will mature into good and fruitful berries at the end of the season, when the owners and olive-gatherers go forth to shake their trees after the rains in the autumn.

The olive-tree is of slow growth, and the husbandman must have long patience. Except under circumstances peculiarly favorable, it bears no berries until the seventh year, nor is the crop worth much until the tree is ten or fifteen years old; but then "the labor of the olive" is very profitable, although it sometimes "fails," as implied in the prayer of Habakkuk,[2] and it will continue to yield its fruit to extreme old age, like the excellent of the earth. So long as there is a mere fragment remaining, though externally the tree looks as dry as a post, yet it continues to yield its oily berries, and for twenty generations the owners gather fruit from the faithful old patriarch. The tree also requires but little care, and will revive again when the ground is dug or ploughed, and begin afresh to yield as before. Vineyards forsaken die out almost immediately, and mulberry orchards neglected run rapidly to ruin, but not so the olive. I saw the deso-



OLIVE-BRANCH.

[1] Job xv. 31, 32.

[2] Hab. iii. 17.

late hills of Jebel el A'alah, above Antioch, covered with such groves, although no one had paid attention to them for half a century.

Is it upon this tenacity of life in the olive that Job bases his affecting comparison in regard to the frailty of man: "There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?"[1]

It is very likely that it was the olive-tree which the patient man of Uz had in mind; for although the facts mentioned apply to other trees in this country, yet they are particularly appropriate to the olive. That tree will thus revive "through the scent of water" after the root has waxed old in the earth, and the stock, to all appearance, become entirely dead. I have seen olive trees which seemed to have neither green wood nor live bark revive and bear a crop of olives when properly cultivated. The next verses in Job's entreaty refer to other facts equally striking and common in this Eastern land: "As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood drieth up; so man lieth down, and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not wake, nor be raised out of their sleep." No one will reside long in this country without becoming more or less familiar with some of the phenomena referred to. The waters fail from the sea, and the clouds bring no refreshing rain; the floods dry up, the land is parched, and every green thing languishes: famine stalks abroad, and pestilence follows in her footsteps; then men lie down and die, nor will they rise up again till the heavens be no more.

If the olive bore every year its value would be doubled; but, like most other trees, it yields only every alternate year. Even with this deduction it is amongst the most valuable species of property in the country. Large trees, in a good season, will yield from ten to fifteen gallons of oil, and the olive crop from an acre of such trees is worth at least one hundred dollars.

The value of this tree is enhanced by the fact that its fruit is indispensable to the comfort, and almost the existence, of the

[1] Job xiv. 7-10.

poorer classes of the community. The Biblical references to that subject are not exaggerated. The berry, pickled, forms the general relish to the farmer's dry bread. He goes forth to his work in the field at early dawn, or sets out on a journey, with no other provision than olives wrapped up in tough paper-like loaves, and with that he is contented. Then almost every dish is cooked in oil, and without it the good-wife would be confounded; and when the oil fails the lamp in the dwelling of the poor expires. Moreover, the entire supply of soap made in this country is from the produce of the olive. Habakkuk, therefore, gives a very striking attestation of his faith in God when he says, "Although the labour of the olive shall fail, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."[1]

Isaiah thus refers to the gathering of the olive: "Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof."[2] Have you noticed the circumstances alluded to by the prophet?

Very often; and it is the language of familiar acquaintance with the subject. As you may never have an opportunity to watch the process, I will describe it as it occurs in such places as Hâsbeiya. Early in autumn the berries begin to drop of themselves, or are shaken off by the wind. They are allowed to remain under the trees for some time, guarded by the watchmen of the town. Then a proclamation is made by the governor that all who have olive-trees should go out and pick what has fallen. Previous to that, not even the owners are allowed to gather olives in the groves. The proclamation is repeated once or twice, according to the season. In November comes the general and final summons, which sends forth all Hâsbeiya. No olives are then safe unless the owner looks after them, for the watchmen are removed, and the groves are alive with men, women, and children. Everywhere the people are in the trees "shaking" them to bring down the fruit.

That is what the prophet had in mind. The effort is to make a clear sweep of the whole crop; but, in spite of shaking and beating, there is always a gleaning left: "two or three berries in the

[1] Hab. iii. 17, 18.

[2] Isa. xvii. 6.

top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches." Those are afterwards gleaned by the very poor, who have no trees of their own, in seeming accordance with the command, "When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow;"[1] and they gather enough to keep a lamp in their habitation during the dismal nights of winter, and to cook their mess of pottage and bitter herbs.

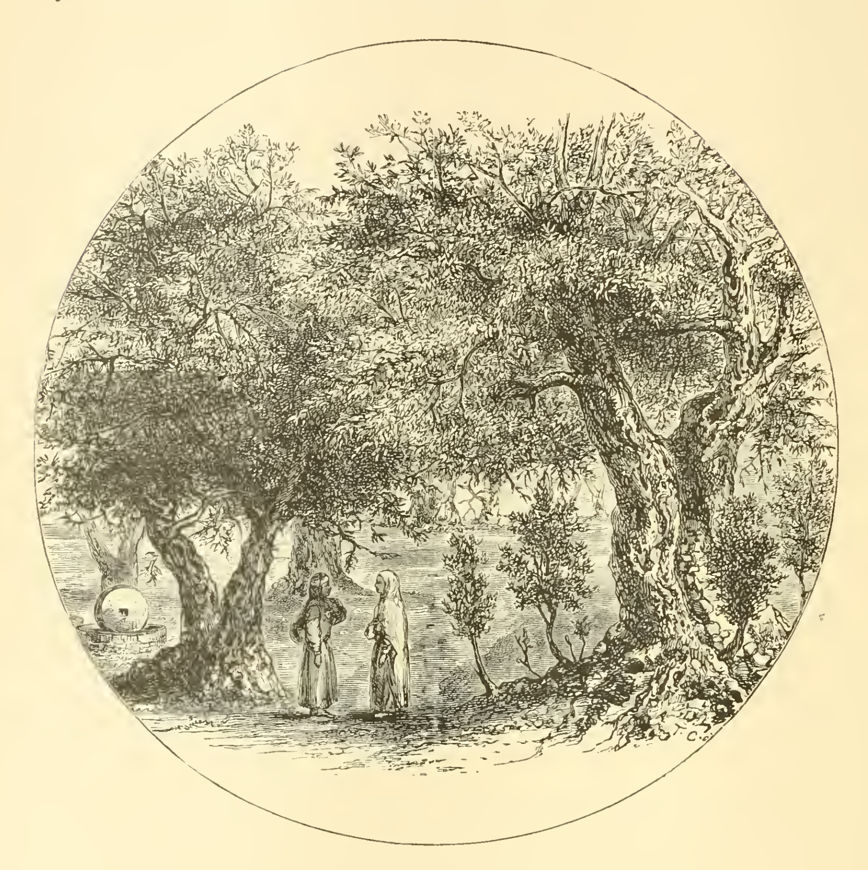
The "shaking of the olive" is the severest operation in Syrian husbandry, particularly in mountainous regions. When the proclamation goes forth to "shake," there can be no postponement. The rainy season has already set in; the trees are dripping with the last shower, or bowing under a load of moist snow; but the owners must shake them, drenching themselves and those below with an artificial storm of rain, snow, and olives. No matter how piercing the wind, or how blinding the rain, that work must go on from early dawn to dark night; and then the weary laborer must carry on his aching back a heavy load of dripping berries two or three miles, it may be, up the mountain to his home. The olive-groves are mostly held in common—not owned in common, but planted on the same general tract of land, without hedges, fences, or walls, and the trees are like those in a natural forest. This tree belongs to Zeid, that to 'Abeid, as they say, and so on through the whole grove. This vast grove below Shuweifât, along which we have been riding for the last hour, has many owners, and in "shaking time" every one must look sharply after his own. There is a great confounding of meum and tuum in the average conscience of olive-gatherers.

To what particular circumstance does the Psalmist refer in the one hundred and twenty-eighth Psalm, where he says, "Thy children shall be like olive plants round about thy table?"

Follow me into the grove, and I will show you what may have suggested the comparison. This aged and decayed tree is surrounded, as you see, by several young and thrifty shoots, which spring from the root of the venerable parent. They seem to uphold and protect it. Thus do good and affectionate children gather round the table of the righteous. Each contributes something to

[1] Deut. xxiv. 20.

the common welfare of the whole—a beautiful sight, with which may God refresh the eyes of all our friends.



OLD OLIVE-TREE.

What a magnificent tree that is which we have just passed!

It is, indeed, a grand old sycamore, under whose grateful shade many a weary traveller seeks protection from the burning sand and the scorching sun. There he dismounts to rest, to drink a cup of coffee, and smoke a nargîleh, which the khânji at Dukkân el Kusîs is always ready to supply.

Here we leave this pleasant grove for that singular sea of sand, which rolls quite back to the gardens of Beirût. Geologists tell us that this sand has travelled long and far before it reached its pre-

sent resting-place. That, in fact, its original home was in the great African desert, and, during the countless ages of the past, it has been drifted first by the wind into the sea, and then by the current along the northern coast past Egypt, and around the head of the sea, until, stopped by the Cape of Beirût, it has been thrown out by the waves on to this plain. Others say that it is the sand of the Nile transported hither by the northern current in this part of the Mediterranean. I believe that we need look no farther than the immediate neighborhood for the origin of this desert. The rock on the shore is a soft sandstone, which is continually disintegrating by the action of wind and wave. The loose sand is cast up upon the beach, and the strong south-west winds which blow across the plain are constantly spreading it inward under our very eyes.

No doubt the Dâmûr and the Ghŭdîr—the latter just ahead of us—bring down a great amount of sand during the winter rains, which is also thrown on shore by the sea. This sand is continually driven in upon these fields like another deluge. Entire mulberry gardens about Beirût, with their trees and houses, have been thus overwhelmed since I came to the country; and the day is not distant when it will have swept over the cape to the bay on the north of the city, unless its course can be arrested. I never take this ride without watching, with weary interest, this ever-changing desert. Upon the great sand-waves, which swell up from twenty to fifty feet high, the west wind makes small but well-defined wavelets, the counterpart in miniature of those it has just left on yonder noisy sea. Should these ripples be caught and fixed by some tranquillizing and indurating agency, we would there have a vast formation of wavy sandstone the origin of which might puzzle the student of earth's rocky mysteries to explain.

These sandy invasions are not found to any injurious extent north of Beirût, but as one goes south they become broader and more continuous. They spread far inland round the Bay of Acre. They begin again at Cæsarea, and reach to the river 'Aujeh; and then south of Jaffa, past Askelon and Gaza, they roll in their desolating waves wider and still wider, until they subside in the great desert that lies between Arabia and Africa. Let us ride up to the crest of that bold sand-wave, and take a look at this prospect, so

eminently Syrian. The local name of this desert of shifting sand is el Kalabât. Ibrahim Pacha told the Emîr of Shuweifât that he had three different seas beneath his feet—the blue Mediterranean, this yellow Kalabât, and the silvery sea of that olive Sahra. All he saw is before us; with the goodly Lebanon for the background, rising range above range, up to where Sŭnnîn lifts his snowy head to the blue firmament of heaven. Picturesque villages sleep at his feet, cling to his sides, or stand out in bold relief upon his ample shoulders, giving variety and interest to the scene.

We have now reached the extensive pine-groves in the suburbs of Beirût; but, instead of passing through them, let us continue our course over the sands, and in half an hour we will reach the western part of the town, and our weary ride will be ended.

II.

BEIRÛT.

Beirût and its Surroundings.—The Plain of Beirût.—Goodly Lebanon.—Beirût from the Sea.—Beirût not a Biblical City.—History of Beirût.—Colonia Augusta Felix Julia, Berytus.—Herod the Great.—Agrippa.—Titus.—Law School.—Earthquake.—Theoprosopon.—The Crusaders.—The Saracens.—Miracle of the Holy Cross.—Palace and Gardens of Fakhr ed Dîn.—The Sarâya.—Muhammed 'Aly.—Bombardment of Beirût.—Population of Beirût.—Railroad.—Antiquities about Beirût.—Ancient Aqueduct.—Tunnel.—The Wife of Haroun er Raschîd.—Ruined Temple at Deir el Kŭl'ah.—"The Smell of Lebanon."—Magnificent Prospect.—Roofs with Battlements. —The Holy Land and the Holy Book.—House-tops.—Samuel and Saul.—David's Palace.—The Inhabitants of Jerusalem upon the House-tops.—Proclamations from the House-tops.—The Year of Jubilee.—Peter Praying upon the House-top.—House-tops in the Time of Christ.—The Sparrow upon the House-top.—In the Streets of Beirût.—Coffee and Coffee-shops.—Shopkeepers.—Pipe-stems.—Cigarettes.—The Letter-writer.—Writing and Writing Materials.—The Open Letter.—Seal Rings.—The Call to Prayer.—Moslems Praying in the Mosk.—Hypocrisy.—The Pilgrimage to Mecca.—Praying Seven Times a Day.—The Sanctimonious Judge.—Praying towards Mecca and Jerusalem.—Shops and Streets.—The Crowded Street.—Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water.—The Gibeonites.—Shaving the Head.—Paul at Cenchrea.—Barbers' Shops.—Street of the Auctioneers.—No Provision for Lighting the Streets. —Bidding the Guests to the Supper.—Dining amongst the Orientals.—Sitting at Meat.—Rice, Stews, and Meats.—Etiquette at Meals.—Washing the Hands.—Elijah and Elisha.—Ceremonial Etiquette.—Pipes, Nargîlehs, and Coffee-cups.—Talking to be Heard.—Garments, Ancient and Modern.—Elijah's Mantle.—Joseph's Coat of Many Colors.—Rending the Clothes.—Linen, Woollen, Cotton, and Silk.—Manners and Customs.—Boots and Shoes.—Putting off the Shoes.—The Head and the Feet.—Costume of the Women.—Domestic Relations.—The Harêm.—Naming the Father after his Eldest Son.—Significant Names, Ancient and Modern.—Sleeping without Change of Garments.—Co-operative House-keeping.—"Saving your Reverence."—Matrimony.—Sons and Daughters.—Marriage with Slaves.

May 28th.

BEIRÛT is said to be not only the most prosperous city of Syria, but also the most beautiful; and as we escaped from the deep sand, and rode along the broad macadamized lanes in the southern suburbs of the town last night, with fine houses and well-

patronized shops on either side, and busy crowds of well-dressed natives, I could see ample corroboration of that statement.

The city itself and the surroundings possess that natural beauty and picturesqueness which never wearies, and is always remembered with delight, even by those who make but a short stay here.

That I can readily believe, and no wonder, for the scenery is on a scale so grand and so varied; but it is almost impossible to get an adequate idea of the whole.

Follow me, then, to the terrace of our house, for it commands the entire prospect of the sea, the city, and the mountains.

The Bay of Beirût is truly magnificent, and the city is even more extensive and beautiful than I had imagined. How clear and transparent is the atmosphere, and how sharply defined are the hills and valleys, the villages, the houses, and even the rocks and trees on lofty Lebanon!

That snow on its summit is thirty miles away, and yet you could almost read your own name if written with a bold hand on its calm, cold brow. You perceive that the city and its suburbs are situated on the northern slope of a triangular plain, whose base-line is the shore, from Râs Beirût southward to Nahr el Yâbis, some six miles distant on the road to Sidon. The perpendicular line runs in eastward from the Râs about five miles to the foot of Sŭnnîn, at the end of St. George's Bay. The hypothenuse is the long line of the mountains from north-east to south-west. The entire plain is a projection seaward from the general direction of the coast, and along the base of the hills it is so low as to appear like an island to one sailing up from Sidon. The surface rises gradually from the south to the immediate vicinity of the city, where in some places it is about three hundred feet above the sea, and it falls rapidly down towards the roadstead on the north by a succession of broad and irregular terraces. It is that feature which imparts such variety and beauty to Beirût and its environs.

The substratum of the plain—a white marl, passing into compact limestone, and enclosing nodules of flint and thin seams of chert—is similar to that of the adjoining hills of Lebanon. Upon that rests a very large formation of arenaceous, unstratified stone, which is easily wrought, and hence has been used from time imme-

morial for building purposes. It is mixed with comminuted shells and corals, and is very porous, absorbing water with great rapidity. This, indeed, is almost the only defect in that otherwise admirable building stone, for it renders the houses very damp in winter. The quarries are to the south-west of the city, and from them a broad belt of loose, movable sand stretches inward from the shore, quite down to the point at Nahr el Yâbis. The south-eastern part of the plain is covered with a dense olive-grove, one of the largest and most productive in Syria, while in the centre are beautiful pine forests, planted, or rather sowed, by successive governors at different times, from the famous Druse chief, Fakhr ed Din, two hundred and fifty years ago, to the recent representative of the Sublime Porte at Beirût. In the suburbs, where they can be irrigated, there are gardens of orange and lemon trees: fig, almond, and apricot trees abound, and the mulberry-tree is found everywhere; and here and there

> The palm-tree rears his stately head on high,
> And spreads his feathery plume along the sky;

while the kharnûb, sycamore, prickly oak, and many a bush and shrub of humbler name, cast abroad their grateful shade, and draw their green mantles over the lovely scene.

The view of the city from the roadstead on the north is the most impressive, I believe?

In that I entirely concur. Coming into the harbor at early dawn, the scenery is grand, and even sublime. Goodly Lebanon, towering to a height of over eight thousand feet, with a diadem of stars around his snowy brow, with his head in heaven and his feet upon the sea, looks like some august monarch of the universe, to be saluted with profound admiration and respect. And as morning brightens to glorious day, what a magnificent panorama is revealed all around the city! The mountains of el Metn and the Kesrawân, on the east and north-east, rugged, steep, and lofty, shaded with pine-forests, and dotted with villages, churches, and convents; the wild gorge of the Dog River, with snowy Sŭnnin beyond and above; the deep Bay of St. George sweeping around the base of the hills; the sandy ridge of Brummâna, and Deir el Kŭl'ah, with the deep ravine of Nahr Beirût; the hills of el Ghŭrb,

bold and bright against the southern sky, extending from Aleih to Abeîh, with villages, hamlets, and factories, and terraced vineyards and fruitful gardens; and the city itself, with its white houses facing seaward, some seated on overhanging cliffs, others grouped on verdant terraces and commanding hill-tops, or stowed away along retiring glens, half revealed, now quite concealed by mulberry and China trees, and waving festoons of vines and cunning creepers of many colors—such is Beirût, under a bright and pure sky, with the glorious Mediterranean around it, and ships and boats of various nations sailing in and out or lying at anchor in the bay.

Is it probable that the Berothai of 2 Samuel viii. 8, from which "King David took exceeding much brass," was Beirût?

I think not; nor is it likely that the Berothah mentioned in Ezekiel xlvii. 16, as one of the places in the northern boundary of the land of Israel, was this city. From the similarity of names, and the geographical position of both, Ezekiel's Berothah and Samuel's Berothai were probably identical, and, of course, neither of them was Beirût. Some go still farther back and assert that it was founded by the Giblites, or "stone-squarers," mentioned by Joshua, and also in the fifth chapter of 1 Kings.[1]

Since Beirût is not mentioned in the Bible, we must look elsewhere, I suppose, for evidences of its antiquity.

Nor are those altogether wanting. Stephanus of Byzantium ascribes the foundation of the city to Kronos, the harvest god, an origin, of course, mythical, but indicating the general belief in its extreme antiquity. Others claim for Beirût the distinction of being one of the oldest of Phœnician towns. It was not, however, until the second century of our era that this place is mentioned, under its Greek name of Berytus, by Strabo, who relates that it was destroyed by Tryphon of Syria, and afterwards rebuilt by the Romans. They established a colony here during the reign of Augustus, and it was called Colonia Augusta Felix Julia, Berytus.

Here, on the advice of Augustus, Herod the Great appeared in court as the accuser of his two sons, whom he afterwards sent to Sebaste, Samaria, where they were strangled. Herod Agrippa II. adorned and beautified Berytus with colonnades, porticoes, theatres,

[1] Josh. xiii. 5; 1 Kings v. 18.



BEIRÛT—BERYTUS—MOUNT LEBANON—JEBEL SÛNNÎN.



baths, and other public buildings, and their remains are scattered over the gardens, and buried beneath the rubbish of the ancient city. It was in the theatres of Agrippa, I suppose, that Titus celebrated his own victories over Jerusalem, and his father's birthday, by gladiatorial shows, in which the miserable captives of Zion perished in great numbers, fighting with wild beasts and with one another, as Josephus informs us.

Though none of the apostles appear to have visited Beirût, yet Christianity was early established here, and this city became the seat of a bishopric. Under the Christian emperors of Constantinople it continued to prosper down to the reign of Justinian. It was then one of the most celebrated seats of learning in the empire, and its law-school, which flourished for a period of over three centuries, was frequented by youth from the first families in the state, and by graduates of the schools of Athens and Alexandria. Then, as now, was the golden age of Beirût's literary fame, and then, as now, it was the most beautiful city on this coast. But its decline commenced under the reign of that emperor.

On the 9th of July, A.D. 551, one of those awful earthquakes, which repeatedly shook the Roman world in the time of Justinian, seems to have entirely destroyed Beirût, overthrown her colleges, churches, temples, theatres, and palaces, and buried multitudes of the inhabitants beneath the ruins; and, although the city was rebuilt, it never regained its former magnificence. You can scarcely walk through the gardens or dig a foundation for a house without coming upon the memorials of that dreadful calamity. It is amazing to see how deeply some of those ruins are entombed, suggesting the idea that the very terraces on which such costly structures stood were upheaved and precipitated on those below. And this corresponds with the history of that fearful time. We are told that "enormous chasms were opened, huge and heavy bodies were discharged into the air, the sea alternately advanced and retreated beyond its ordinary bounds," and a mountain was torn from that bold promontory—then called Theoprosopon, the face of God, and now Râs esh Shukkah—and cast into the sea, where it formed a mole for the harbor of Batrûn. Perhaps its Arabic name, implying the cape of the split or cleft open, may be a witness of that catastrophe.

Beirût shared in all the troubles and revolutions which accompanied and grew out of the conquest of this country by the Muhammedans. In the time of the Crusades, it was taken by Baldwin in 1110, and, during the two hundred years of Frank rule on this coast, it was several times captured and recaptured by Saracen and Christian. Since the close of the thirteenth century few signal events have happened to vary the monotony of its story. But in the eighth century an illustrious miracle spread the name and fame of this city far and wide. Some image-hating Hebrews, in scorn and mockery, attempted, it is said, to go through the acts of the Crucifixion upon a holy image and cross; when, as they thrust a spear into its side, to their confusion and horror, a large quantity of blood and water gushed forth. Without resorting to supernatural interference, a little manœuvring, or a little money, could have set either real or spurious Jews at work to bring about the miracle. But Beirût has no need of such doubtful claims to immortality. Judging from the scanty and indefinite notices by the pilgrims of the mediæval ages, the number of its inhabitants varied from five to ten thousand, engaged in commerce and in the manufacture of olive oil and soap, and the culture of silk, which for several centuries continued to be the staple productions of this region.

In the early part of the seventeenth century the famous Druse emîr, Fakhr ed Dîn, "the glory of religion," established himself in Beirût. He is said to have filled up the port to prevent the landing of pirates; and to have planted the extensive pine-groves in the vicinity of the city. He built a large palace in the north-eastern part of the town, and, after his return from Italy, he adorned it with ample gardens. That palace, though in a very dilapidated condition, is now the Sarâya, or official residence of the Pasha, but the gardens have long since disappeared.

When Muhammed 'Aly wrested Syria from the Sultan, in 1830–'31, he made Beirût the chief quarantine station on the coast, and obliged all ships to come to this port. But during the month of September, 1840, the combined English and Austrian fleet bombarded the castles and fortifications, and compelled the Egyptian troops, under Suleimân Pasha, to evacuate the place. Beirût was restored to the Turk; and as European merchants were already set-

tled here, and the foreign consuls had selected it for their residence, that Government made it the capital of the country. Forty years ago, when I came to Beirût, there was scarcely a house outside of the walls fit to live in ; now hundreds of convenient dwellings, and not a few large and noble mansions, adorn its beautiful suburbs, and two-thirds of the population reside in the gardens. The massacres of 1860 led many of the inhabitants of Damascus, the Lebanon, and elsewhere, to settle in Beirût, which added largely to its inhabitants, and many of the public buildings that attract the notice of visitors now have been erected since that deplorable event.

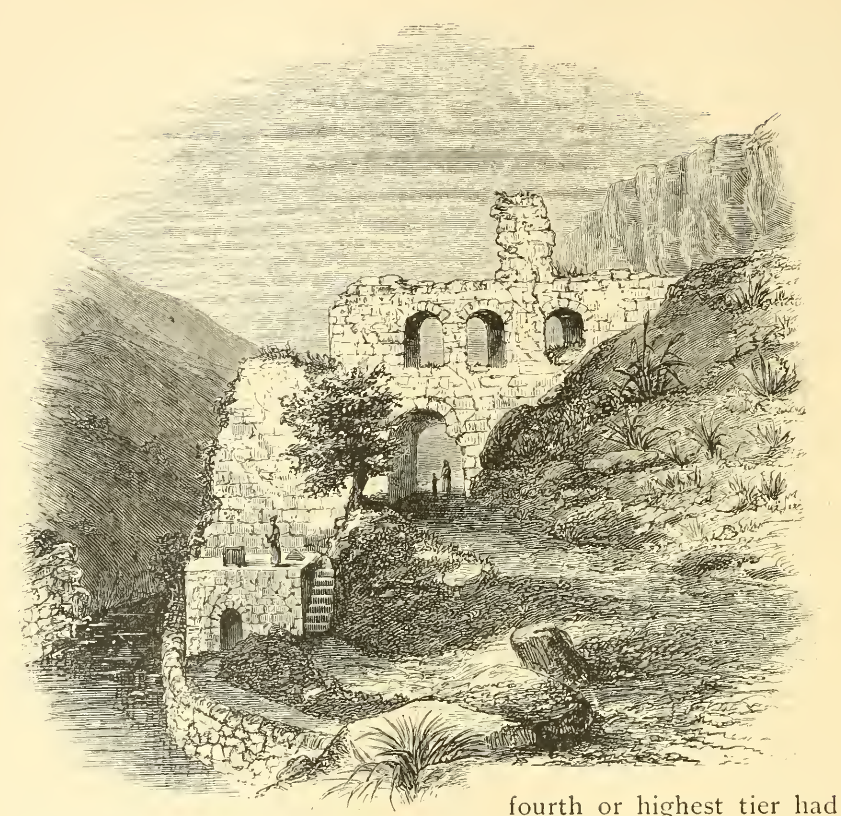
The population is now estimated at eighty thousand, more than one-half of which is made up of the various Christian sects and denominations. No city in Syria, perhaps none in the Turkish Empire, has had so rapid an expansion. And it must continue to grow and prosper, with but one proviso to cast a shade of doubt upon its bright future. Should a railroad ever connect the head of this sea with the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf, that will inevitably dictate where the emporium of Syria is to be. If Beirût can attract that line of trade and travel to its door, it will rank amongst the important cities of the world ; if it cannot, then must it wane before some other rival queen of the East.

Are there many antiquities about Beirût?

There are columns and sarcophagi in abundance, and some of them have inscriptions which tell their own story. An ancient aqueduct has been discovered, cut through the rock, and passing beneath the city at Bâb Y'akôb. It must either have had a more permanent supply of water than at present, which fails in dry weather, when it is most needed, or have been connected with the ancient aqueduct which brought water from Lebanon to Berytus.

Are the existing remains of that ancient work extensive?

More so than most travellers, or even natives, are aware of. The supply of water for that aqueduct came from a fountain in the bed of the Beirût River, below Deir el Kŭl'ah. The aqueduct from it was conducted along the hill-side above the north bank of the river for a mile or more. It was then carried over the river upon a series of lofty arches. The first and lowest tier had only two arches, the second three. The next tier above had fifteen, and the



ANCIENT AQUEDUCT OVER THE BEIRÛT RIVER.

fourth or highest tier had twenty-five arches, and the canal upon them was about one hundred and sixty feet above the bed of the river. The wall of the aqueduct was twenty feet broad, and was built of well-cut stone, and the entire structure must have presented a grand and very imposing appearance.

Though carried over the river at so great an elevation, the canal, on the Beirût or west bank, met with perpendicular cliffs, and passed directly into them by a tunnel cut in the solid rock. I once crept into it a distance of a few feet, beyond which it is now choked up with rubbish. The tunnel, excavated along and within the face of the cliff, was conducted in a direction nearly north for a considerable distance, and at intervals of a few rods shafts were sunk from the top and covered over with massive arches, to prevent the

débris from the cliff falling into and choking up the canal. They are still quite perfect, and are amongst the best specimens of ancient vaults. The great elevation of the aqueduct over the river shows that the design was to carry the water to the highest terraces in the suburbs of Beirût, and that this was actually done is demonstrated by many channels which have been discovered in the gardens to the west and south of the city.

Descending to the margin of the plain, the canal was led along the base of the hills southward, past Khân esh Shîâh, and thence westward to the vicinity of Beirût, and the water was distributed through many pipes to various parts of the city. As the plain west of esh Shîâh is quite low, the canal had to be elevated by a long line of arches, erected upon a broad and massive wall. It was built solid throughout, of large, well-squared stone, and was about forty feet wide at the base. No traces of the arches now exist, but masses of tufaceous deposit remain formed by the trickling of the water through the aqueduct, similar to those along the ancient canals of Tyre and Acre. The wall itself, however, was nearly entire when I first came to this country; but the rapid growth of Beirût created such a demand for building-stone that the greater part of it has been quarried and brought to the city. In that process, palm and olive trees, which had grown old upon the top, were undermined and thrown away; and where the work of quarrying has been completed, and the ground levelled, mulberry-trees are now flourishing upon it. The Arabs, as a matter of course, ascribe the building of that aqueduct to Sit Zebeideh, the wife of Haroun er Raschîd; but, whether constructed by Phœnicians, Greeks, or Romans, it was an admirable work, and a great blessing to the inhabitants of ancient Berytus.

What place is Deir el Kŭl'ah?

Deir el Kŭl'ah is the name of a Maronite convent situated on the southern termination of that bold ridge of Lebanon east of Beirût. It occupies the site of an ancient temple, the walls of which have been thrown down to the very foundation, either by over-zealous Christians of early days, or by fanatical Moslems of later times. This must have been no easy achievement, for the walls were built with great blocks of hard breccia marble, from

eight to fourteen feet long, four broad, and five thick, resting on the everlasting rock of the mountain; and it is evident that neither earthquake nor any other known natural agency could have effected such an overthrow. With the single exception of Ba'albek, it must have been the largest and most splendid temple on or amongst these mountains. The body of the edifice was one hundred and six feet long and fifty-four wide, having a grand portico thirty feet broad on the west end, making the entire length from south-east to north-west one hundred and thirty-six feet. The portico was supported by a double row of columns, four in each row. The lower parts of four or five of these still stand upon their original bases, and are nearly six feet in diameter. There were no columns either on the east end or along the sides, but the portico must have presented a magnificent appearance.

Though fronting north-west instead of to the east, that temple was no doubt dedicated to Baal, like many others on and around Lebanon and Hermon. This is confirmed by Greek and Latin inscriptions found mostly built into the walls of the convent. In common with other visitors I have repeatedly transcribed them, and about a dozen have been discovered, copied and deciphered. One inscription in the kitchen of the convent, "being interpreted," reads: "Balmarkos, Sovereign, Lord of Sports." It is pleasant to find that his Sovereign Lordship assumed a character so amiable in presence of this beautiful city. It must have been a favorite resort of the Beirûteens for making "kaif," sport, and there I have found the aromatic "smell of Lebanon" exceedingly grateful, and the glorious prospect most exhilarating.

Seated on the very last ledge of that lofty headland overhanging the gorge on three sides, with the Beirût River two thousand feet below, the eye wanders mountainward up two tremendous ravines to snowy Sŭnnîn, over eight thousand feet high, on the north-east, and to Jebel Kenîseh, more than six thousand feet high, on the south-east — a wilderness of gigantic cliffs and well-wooded ridges, where nestle many picturesque hamlets under oak-groves or amongst dark forests of fragrant pine. Southward, and westward, and northward lies the whole plain, with the city beyond, and the view has no other limit than the utmost horizon along the van-

ishing verge of the "great and wide sea." Such panoramic scenes can neither be painted nor described, they must be seen and felt. On the north of that site are the remains of an ancient town now covered and concealed by a thick grove of young oak-trees. To that town and to the temple at Deir el Kŭl'ah an aqueduct brought the cool water from its distant source north-east of Brummâna.



HOUSE-TOPS, SHOWING ROOFS AND BATTLEMENTS.

The flat roofs of these Beirût houses afford such a delightful promenade, and the prospect is so beautiful, that one can scarcely keep away from them by day or night. So absorbed was I just now in gazing about and listening to your peroration, that, if it had not been for the parapet, I should have walked quite off the terrace, and then found myself on the ground below with a broken limb.

A very practical illustration, that, of the wisdom and humanity of the command in Deuteronomy xxii. 8: "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence." That ordinance ought to be enforced by law wherever the roofs are flat, and resorted to for relaxation, for sleeping, or for business. Roofs were appropriated to similar purposes at a very early age. Rahab had evidently placed her flax on the roof of her house, at Jericho, to preserve it; and when the Hebrew spies were sought for by the men of that city, she "brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof."[1]

Ordinary houses have no other place where the inmates can either "smell the air," dry the clothes, set out their flower-pots, or do numberless other things essential to their health and comfort. This is particularly true within the city walls; and in villages the roof is very useful. There the farmer suns his wheat for the mill, and the flour when brought home, and dries his figs, raisins, and other fruits in safety both from animals and from thieves.

Though we may have travelled beyond the limits of the Holy Land, I see abundant evidence that we are still surrounded by scenes and scenery that aptly illustrate the Holy Book; and I am glad that it is so, for it is this that imparts the greatest interest to our rambles, and constitutes their chief value.

This land of Syria and Palestine—these mountains and valleys, hills and plains, rivers and lakes, the sea and the sky—claims no inherent attractions over other countries, and, the Bible left out, other parts of the world may surpass it in interest and importance. We must, therefore, ever keep in view the purpose and aim of our travels. Nor will that be difficult, for we shall continually be reminded of it by many and varied incidents and experiences. This subject of house-tops is a very Biblical one, and will bear farther illustration by the actual habits of the people at this day.

For a great part of the year the roof, or "house-top," is the most agreeable place about the house, especially in the morning and evening. There many sleep during the summer, both in the

[1] Josh. ii. 6.

city and the country, and in all places where malaria does not render it dangerous. This custom is very ancient. Though, according to our translation of 1 Samuel ix. 25, 26, Samuel calls Saul *to* the top of the house, that he might send him away, instead of *from* it, yet, taking the whole passage together, there can be no doubt but that the process should be reversed. The Arabic has it thus: Samuel "conversed with Saul upon the roof; and early at the dawn Samuel called Saul from the roof," etc., etc. This is natural, and doubtless the correct history of the case. Saul, young, vigorous, but weary with his long search, would desire no better place to sleep than on the roof. But there should always be battlements, and they should be kept in proper repair. The Moslems generally build very high parapets, in order to screen their harêm from observation; but the Christians are very negligent, and do bring blood upon their houses by a disregard of that law of Moses.

Your remark about the Moslems suggests the thought that if Uriah's house had been thus protected, David might have been saved from a series of crimes, and Israel from dreadful calamity.

True; but then the roof of David's palace was probably so high that he could look directly down into the courts of the neighboring houses. There are such in most cities, and one can scarcely commit a greater offence than to frequent a terrace which thus commands the interior of other people's dwellings.

Isaiah has a reference to house-tops in the twenty-second chapter which I do not quite understand. He says, verse first, "What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the house-tops?" For what purpose did the inhabitants of Jerusalem go there?

That is a remarkable passage. Verse second goes on to say, "Thou art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city;" from which one might suppose that the people had gone to the roofs to eat, drink, clap hands, and sing, as the Arabs delight to do in the mild summer evenings. But, from verses fifth to seventh, it is plain that it was a time of "trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity;" which naturally suggests the idea that the inhabitants had rushed to the tops of the houses to get a sight of those chariots and horsemen of Elam and Kir, with whom their choice valleys were full, and who were thundering against the gates of the city.

And, as Oriental houses have no windows looking into the streets, or, if there are such, they are closely latticed, there is no place but the roof from whence to obtain a view of what is going on without. When, therefore, anything extraordinary occurs in the streets the people rush to the roofs and look over the battlements.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem, at the time of that Assyrian invasion, were probably seized with frenzy and madness, as they were centuries after, when the city was besieged by the Roman legions under Titus. Then, according to Josephus, some revelled in drunken feasts, and kept the place in alarm by their stirs and tumults; some were engaged in plunder and murder; some wept bitterly, because of the spoiling of the daughter of God's people. It was a day of universal and utter confusion. Nobody could sit still, but all hurried to the house-tops, either to join in untimely riots of fanaticism and drunken despair, or to watch with fear and trembling the assault upon their walls and gates.

Was it not customary in the time of our Saviour to make public proclamations from the tops of the houses?

Such an inference may be drawn from Matthew x. 27, and Luke xii. 3. Our Lord spent most of his life in villages, and accordingly the reference there probably was to a custom observed only in such places, never in cities. At the present day local governors in country districts cause their commands thus to be published. Their proclamations are generally made in the evening, after the people have returned from their labors in the field. The public crier ascends the highest roof at hand, and in a long-drawn call admonishes all faithful subjects of the Prophet, within the hearing of his voice, to pray to him. He then proceeds with the announcement in a set form, and demands obedience thereto.

It was somewhat in this manner, I suppose, that the year of Jubilee was proclaimed throughout the land, according to the command in Leviticus, twenty-fifth chapter and tenth verse.

The proclamation of that ordinance, so unique and unparalleled in the legislation of the world, was to be made with trumpets. Whether straight, like those seen on the Arch of Titus, at Rome, or crooked, like those rams' horns with which the walls of Jericho were blown down, is not known. That joyful proclamation was

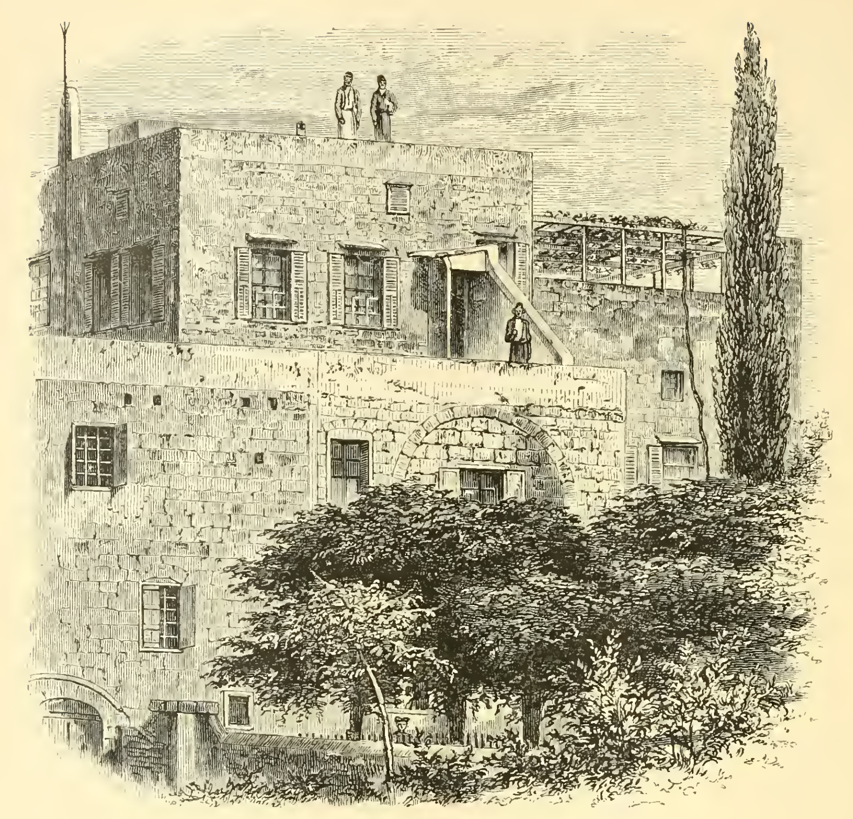
to be made by the priests, in the first instance; but as it was to be made "throughout all the land," on one and the same day, the great day of atonement, it is scarcely possible that there were priests enough furnished with "trumpets" to sound the news in every village or hamlet, and in every city and town in all their borders. Maimonides tells us that every Hebrew at the Jubilee blew nine blasts, so as to make the trumpet literally sound throughout the land. Accustomed as I have been to proclamations made from house-tops by the human voice, I can fancy that the sound of the Jubilee trumpets from the Temple of the Lord would be instantly caught up and heralded abroad from every hill-top and mountain height, even to the utmost border of the land. The expectant and joyful nation would then neither need nor wait for the mere sound of trumpets and rams' horns, but the people themselves with their own glad voices would proclaim aloud the acceptable year of the Lord:

> The year of Jubilee is come:
> Return, ye ransomed captives, home.

It is plain that the roofs were resorted to for worship, both true and idolatrous. We read, in Zephaniah i. 5, of "them that worship the host of heaven upon the house-tops;" and from Acts x. 9 we learn that at Joppa "Peter went up upon the house-top to pray about the sixth hour," before the arrival of the men from Cæsarea.

All this is very natural. The Sabeans of Chaldea and Persia could find no more appropriate place for the performance of their idolatrous worship of the heavenly bodies than the open terraces, with the stars shining down upon them so kindly. And as few, if any, ancient dwellings had closets into which the devout could retire for prayer, I suppose Peter was obliged to resort to the roof of Simon's house for that purpose; and when surrounded with battlements, and shaded by vines trained over them, like those of the present day, they would afford a very agreeable retreat, even at "the sixth hour," or about noon—the time when Peter was favored with that singular vision, by which the kingdom of heaven was thrown open to the entire Gentile world.

Our Lord says, "Let him which is on the house-top not come



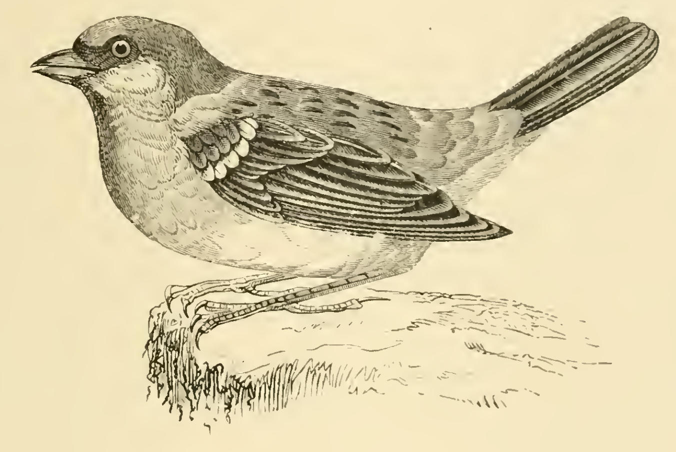
TERRACE COVERED WITH VINES.

down to take any thing out of his house."[1] Is it a correct inference from this that the stairway landed on the outside of the house?

Probably outside of the house, but within the exterior court. It would be neither agreeable nor safe to have the stairs land outside the enclosure altogether, and it is rarely done, except in mountain villages, and where roofs are but little used. They not unfrequently end at the lewan, but more commonly in some part of the lower court. The urgency of the flight recommended by our Lord is enhanced by the fact that the stairs probably did lead down into the court or lewan. He in effect says, though you must pass by the very door of your room, do not enter; escape for your life, without a moment's hesitation or delay.

[1] Matt. xxiv. 17.

No traveller in Syria will need an introduction to the sparrow on the house-top. They are a tame, troublesome, vivacious, and impertinent generation, and nestle just where they are not wanted. They stop up the stoves-pipes and water-gutters with their rubbish, build nests in the windows and under the beams in the roof, and would stuff your hat full of stubble if they found it hanging in a place to suit them. They are extremely pertinacious in asserting their right of possession, and have not the least reverence for any place or thing. David alludes to these characteristics of the sparrow in the eighty-fourth Psalm, when he complains that they had



THE SPARROW.

appropriated even the altars of God for their nests. Concerning himself, he says, "I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top."[1] When one of them has lost its mate—a matter of every-day occurrence—he will sit on the house-top alone, and lament by the hour his sad bereavement. As these birds are not much relished for food, five sparrows may still be sold for "two farthings;" and when we see the eagerness with which they are destroyed as a worthless nuisance, we can appreciate the assurance that our heavenly Father, who takes care of them, so that not one can fall to the ground without his notice, will surely take care of us, who "are of more value than many sparrows."[2]

[1] Psa. cii. 7.

[2] Matt. x. 29, 31; Luke xii. 6, 7.

Let us now descend from the house-top, and visit some of the shops and streets in the city.

A stroll through an Oriental town is always either amusing or instructive; and in no other way, I suppose, can a stranger gain so rapid an insight into the manners and customs of the people. We have already passed several coffee-shops, with picturesque groups of natives, seated on low stools, or upon large mats, sipping black coffee from tiny porcelain cups, and sending forth clouds of smoke from long pipes, or from those wonderfully contrived and bubbling nargîlehs.

You may regard the custom of frequenting coffee-shops with the greater satisfaction, because that mode of spending time and obtaining rest and refreshment is free from the degrading and ruinous vices attending saloons and dram-shops in other countries. I do not mean that everything indulged in by the frequenters of Oriental cafés is innocent. Many of them waste much time at card-playing and other methods of gambling. But even in those matters the stakes are insignificant, and the consequences not very mischievous. Until something better can take their place, we may pass on and leave the Oriental in peaceful possession of his café, and its cheap and harmless attractions.

Here is a shopkeeper whose small stock in trade consists entirely of coffee-cups, pipes, and tobacco.

As in other lands so it is here: many of the occupations of the middle classes have reference to the necessities and habits of the people. Next to him is another who has in his shop a small turning-lathe, by means of which he perforates long pipe-stems, and then fits them with bowls of colored clay, and mouth-pieces of glass, bone, or amber. The amount of capital invested in that business, and the gain accruing, is extremely small; but those who follow such avocations are simple in their habits and frugal in their mode of life.

In the matter of smoking, as in others far more important, the people of Beirût have departed greatly from former customs. Amongst native Christians especially, the cigarette has taken the place of the more luxurious pipe, and the elegant and complicated nargîleh. Still, there is quite a display of them in many houses.



THE LETTER-WRITER.

Here on our right is something sufficiently Oriental, I suppose, though there is no mention of such a custom in Biblical times.

That old man sitting by the mosk is a letter-writer. He has his paper near him, and his scissors to trim it to the required shape and

size. And now he takes the ink-horn, or what answers to that very ancient article of the "scribes," from his girdle, and points one of those "reeds" so often mentioned by the sacred writers. All this seems Biblical enough. But there comes a woman, veiled from head to foot, and takes her station by his side. See, she is whispering from behind her veil the desired message. That is suffi-



WRITING AND WRITING MATERIALS.

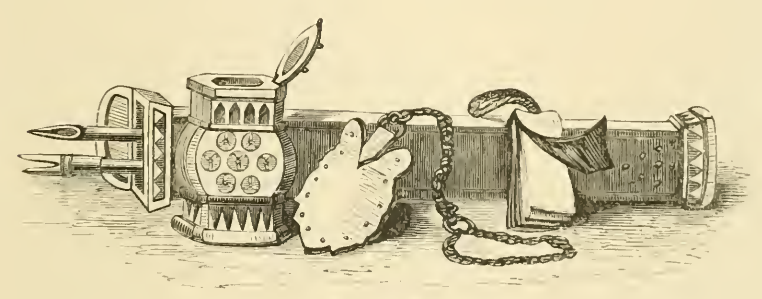
cient, the introduction consisting of complimentary phrases; the salâms, etc., go in according to rule, and to all alike.

Why, it is a kind of Moslem confessional, and that aged head must be full of the secrets and the scandal of half the city.

I suppose, like other confessors, he keeps the faith, and may be trusted. Still, letter-writing is not a thriving business in this country, since even Moslem women are now learning to write.

The writing materials are very curious, and the mode of using them is peculiar, to say the least.

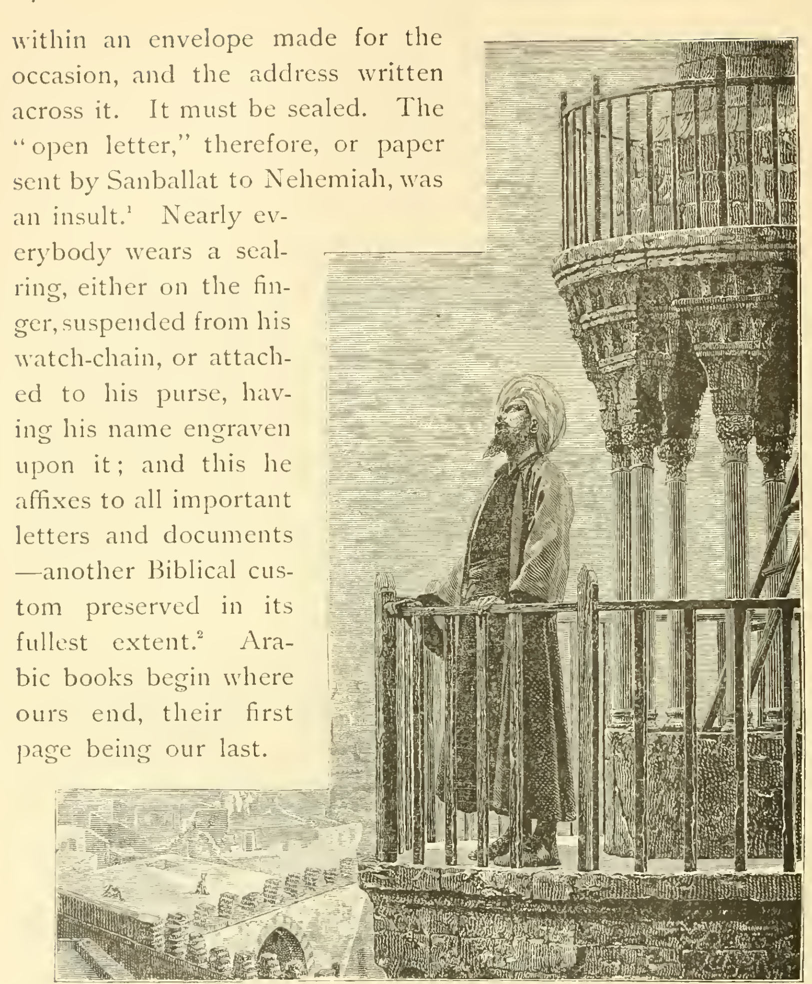
They do not carry ink-horns now, as the prophets and scribes of old did, but have a metal or ebony case for their reed pens, with a bulb of the same material, attached to the upper end, for the ink. That case they thrust through the girdle, and carry with them at all times. When they are to write a letter, for example, they open the lid of the ink-bulb, draw out a long reed pen from the case,



MODERN ARAB INK-HORN.

double over the paper, and begin from the right side, holding the paper in the hand, without any other support. To be very respectful, they take a large sheet, and the lines should incline upward towards the left corner of the paper. They have formal introductions expressing sentiments of the highest regard and esteem, no matter to whom they are writing, friend or enemy. After that, which, if it have any meaning, is egregious flattery, they make an epitome of the letter they are to answer, repeating it, word for word, as we often find done in the Bible. They date at the top, but mention of the place is not always considered essential; and I have often been at a loss to discover where to address my reply. The letter should be folded long, like documents on file, placed

within an envelope made for the occasion, and the address written across it. It must be sealed. The "open letter," therefore, or paper sent by Sanballat to Nehemiah, was an insult.[1] Nearly everybody wears a seal-ring, either on the finger, suspended from his watch-chain, or attached to his purse, having his name engraven upon it; and this he affixes to all important letters and documents—another Biblical custom preserved in its fullest extent.[2] Arabic books begin where ours end, their first page being our last.



EL MUEZZIN—THE CALL TO PRAYER.

It is now quite time to turn our steps homeward. The muezzin calls "the faithful" to sunset prayers, from that tall and slender minaret; and dinner will be waiting. Rich and poor, all sects and classes in the East, generally dine when the day's work is done, as was the custom in ancient Biblical times.

See those men in that mosk. One has spread his cloak, and others their Persian rugs, towards the south. They are preparing

[1] Neh. vi. 5. [2] 1 Kings xxi. 8.

to say prayers—perform them, rather—in this most public place, and in the midst of all this noise and confusion.

That man, standing with his face towards Mecca, raises his open hands till the thumbs touch the ears, exclaiming aloud, Allah hû



EL JÂMI'A—THE MOSK.

akbar—"God is most great." After uttering mentally a few short petitions, the hands are brought down, and folded together near the girdle, while he recites the first chapter of the Korân, and two or three other brief passages from the same book. And now he bends forward, rests both hands upon his knees, and repeats three times a formula of praise to "God the most great." Then, standing up erect, he cries Allah hû akbar, as at the beginning. He then drops upon his knees, and bends forward until his forehead touches the ground, between his expanded hands. This he does three times, muttering all the while short formulas of prayer and praise. The next movement will bring him to his knees, and then, settling back upon his heels, he mumbles over various small petitions, with sundry exclamations, according to form and custom. He has now gone through one regular Rek'âh; and, standing up as at the first, and on the



MOSLEMS AT PRAYER.

same spot, he will perform a second, and, if specially devout, even a third, with the same genuflections.

They seem to be wholly absorbed in their devotions, and manifest a power of isolation and abstraction quite surprising.

That is the result of habit and education; small children imitate it to perfection. There is certainly an air of great solemnity in their mode of worship, and, when performed by a large assembly in the mosks, or by a detachment of soldiers in concert, guided in their genuflections by an imâm or dervish, chanting the service, it is quite impressive. I have seen it enacted by moonlight, on the wild banks of the Orontes, in the plain of Hamath, and the scene was something more than romantic. But, alas! it was by as villanous a set of robbers as could be found, even in that lawless region.

You think, then, that this solemn ceremony is mere hollow-hearted hypocrisy?

Not exactly that; at least not necessarily so, nor in all cases. I would be glad to believe there was ordinarily any corresponding moral and religious feeling connected with this exterior manifestation of devotion. The Moslems themselves, however, have no such idea. They are rather afraid of any one who is especially sanctimonious and given to prayer—their prayers, I mean. They have a proverb to this effect: "If your neighbor has made the pilgrimage to Mecca once, watch him; if twice, avoid his society; if three times, move into another street." And, certainly, no one acquainted with the people will feel his confidence in an individual increased by the fact that he is particularly devout.

How often, during the day and night, do the orthodox Muhammedans perform their regular prayers?

The orthodox number is five; the first at sunset, called salât el mŭgrib, because, according to Oriental usage, the day commences at that time. The second is about an hour and a half later, and is called salât el 'éshê. The third is at the dawn, and the fourth is at noon, called respectively, salât es sûbh and salât ed dŭhr. The fifth, which is salât el 'asr, comes midway between noon and sunset. Those who are especially devout observe two additional seasons, one soon after midnight, and the other about an hour before daybreak, seven in all, and to some such

custom in Biblical times there seems to be an allusion in Psalm cxix. 164: "Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments." But the times most scrupulously observed are three—at sunset, in the morning, and at noon. In this, also, they apparently conform to the seasons of devotion mentioned by David in Psalm lv. 17: "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and call aloud: and he shall hear my voice."

It is, to say the least, interesting and suggestive to notice these correspondencies between the periods of prayer amongst the Moslems and those of the Hebrews in the olden times.

Many of these people are ostentatiously devout when abroad, somewhat after the fashion of the Pharisees, I suppose. Look at that fine, portly man, for instance, walking slowly and a little in advance of his retainers and servants. He is the judge, or kâdy, returning from the mehkameh, or court of justice. That is his "walk" before the public, whatever his "conversation" or behavior may be at home. No matter what dark schemes he may have been cogitating to sell justice at the highest available price, no sooner does he leave his door and make his appearance abroad than he subsides into serenest gravity. With an austere and sanctimonious air he passes along, a mesbahah, or string of beads, in his hand, his eyes half closed, and his lips moving incessantly in pious ejaculations—brief prayers and citations from the Korân. In all this there is no appearance of affectation. Habit, from his early childhood, has made it natural, and let us hope that he himself is scarcely conscious of acting the hypocrite.

When in the mehkameh he will pause at the call of the muezzin, rise from his divan, and, with an attitude and air of the utmost devotion, betake himself to his carpet and prayers, in the presence of the entire court, and of the victims, too, of his legal villanies. This kâdy is neither exceptional nor exaggerated, and alas! his kind of piety is associated with the most tiger-hearted fanaticism. Just such men planned and guided those diabolical butcheries and massacres in 1860, and those which have, in by-gone days, shocked and horrified the civilized world; nor will they hesitate to repeat such atrocities whenever and wherever the opportunity offers. There is something so terrible in this phase of human nature that

no mantle of charity is sufficiently ample to hide its inexpressible ugliness and fiendish cruelty.

What opposite conclusions different persons can and do draw from the same premises! One who looks merely at the surface, or who is very "liberal," or very indifferent, may connect out-of-door or formal praying towards Mecca with the venerable custom of the pious Israelite turning towards the Temple in Jerusalem, when, like Daniel in Babylon, "he prayed and gave thanks before his God."[1]

I think it probable that Muhammed, or the Arabs before him, borrowed that custom from the Jews; and, to this extent, there is a relation between them. He did not need to originate the idea of a Kibleh—south. That was an ancient custom. He, however, changed his Kibleh more than once before success enabled him to fix it permanently in Mecca, towards Beit Allah, where the Black Stone is, and the well Zemzem. It seems evident, from the way in which Solomon mentions praying towards the Temple, at the very dedication of it, that it had been the custom of the children of Israel from remote antiquity to direct their faces in prayer towards the place where the ark and the altar were located. They being permanently established in Jerusalem by David, the ceremonious Jew had already learned to turn in his devotions towards the Holy City chosen by Jehovah for his special dwelling-place.[2]

The enlightened Christian, who has learned that "neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem," shall men worship the Father, who is a Spirit, and must be worshipped "in spirit and in truth"[3]—such a one will be reminded by the praying Moslem in the street and at the mosk of those who "love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men." And he will remember with solemnity the admonition of our Lord, "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are"—either as to place, attitude, motive, or form—in public to be seen of men, using "vain repetitions," as these Moslems still do.[4] They are obliged to repeat some expressions thirty times; others many hundred times. Would that these remarks did not apply to nominal Christians in this land as well as to Moslems!

Some of these crooked, narrow streets, with gutters in the mid-

[1] Dan. vi. 10, 11. [2] 1 Kings viii. 44, 48. [3] John iv. 21, 24. [4] Matt. vi. 5, 7.

dle, and no sidewalks; with these closet-like shops, whose raised platforms extend so far into the thoroughfare; with low vaulted



ES SÛK—THE STREET.

arches overhead, upon which houses appear to be built, and with kiosks and latticed windows almost meeting from the opposite sides, are anything but cheerful and convenient.

Especially the latter, when the street is crowded with men,

women, and children, horses, camels, donkeys, and dogs — all contributing to the noise and confusion, shouting, calling, crying, growling, braying, barking, biting, and fighting. This man warns the throng to be careful lest they get their clothes wet by coming in contact with his burden — a water-bottle made out of the whole skin of an ox. Those boys are shouting, at the top of their voices, "Your back! your face!" admonishing the crowd to look sharply before and behind, or they may be knocked down, run over, crushed against the wall; or have their clothes torn, and their faces lacerated by the sticks of wood on the backs of the donkeys: a very necessary admonition.

That I perceive well enough, and both the donkey-boys and the water-carrier remind me of that Biblical expression, now passed into a proverb—"Hewers of wood and drawers of water."

Their occupation is one of slavish toil, and they are to be encountered everywhere — at the entrance to private houses, in the crooked streets, on the broad carriage-roads, and in the narrow lanes in the suburbs of the town. Beirût still depends largely upon hewers of wood and drawers of water, and they are a necessity here to-day, as were the Gibeonites when they were employed in the same service about the sanctuary.[1]

Well, that is a strange sight, and one which I did not expect to see in a civilized city like Beirût. This barber has established himself on the flag-stones in that sheltered corner, and is plying his art upon the head of that muleteer seated on the mat in front of him, and meekly holding the basin under his own chin. He is actually shaving the man's head as bare as the palm of my hand! Are we to suppose that Paul submitted to an operation like that when he shaved his head at Cenchrea, and again at Jerusalem?[2]

I see no reason to doubt it. Then, as now, it may have been the custom to shave the head in the public street. The poor, and especially the laboring classes amongst the Christians, get shaved anywhere—on the roadside, beneath the shade of some patriarchal tree, at the khân or way-side inn, and in villages and towns, on the thoroughfares, or in the streets.

Ignorant and fanatical Moslems reserve a lock of hair on the

[1] Josh. ix. 23, 27. [2] Acts xviii. 18; xxi. 24.

top of the head, not only to distinguish them from Christians, but also, if they fall in battle against "the unbelievers," to allow of the head being carried by it, when severed from the body. Otherwise the impure hand of "the infidel" would be inserted into the mouth of "the believer," and thus defile it. There are barber-shops for



SHAVING THE HEAD.

the well-to-do and intelligent Moslems, like this one on our left; and others fitted up in European style, and patronized by foreign residents, travellers, and the better class amongst the Christians.

What a Babel of discordant sounds! and yet what a perfect paradise for the relic hunter, the antiquarian, and the artist these old curiosity shops are, crammed full with such an extraordinary collection of Oriental articles of every shape and description!

We are now in "the street of the auctioneers," and these men, besetting us on every side, and jabbering at us so incoherently, are the dellâlîn, or auctioneers. They wear swords round their waists, daggers and pistols stuck into their girdles, carry guns on their shoulders, and cast-off finery on their arms, from the embroidered and spangled veil to the elegant cloth jacket gleaming in purple and gold, and from a praying-rug to a red fez cap or a green turban—all "going, going, gone," to the highest bidder.

No wonder that "the buyer," in Solomon's time, if he ever ex-



BARBER-SHOP—AUCTIONEER.

perienced any such ordeal as this, should exclaim, in order to escape from their importunities, "It is naught, it is naught: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth."[1]

[1] Prov. xx. 14.

Already the shades of evening fall heavily along these gloomy streets, and I see no provision for lighting them.

There is none; and you observe that the shopkeepers are shutting up, and leaving for home. Thenceforward until morning the streets are deserted and silent, with only here and there a company returning from a visit, with a servant carrying a lantern before them. The city guard creeps softly about in darkness, and apprehends all found walking the streets without a light. Beirût is gradually departing from many of these customs, and some of the shops in the suburbs are patronized until a late hour; still enough of them remain to afford a type of all that can be seen elsewhere, except at Damascus. That city is wholly different, and carries one back to the age of the Caliphs and the creations of the "Thousand and One Nights."

May 31st.

The friend at whose house we dined last evening sent a servant to call us when dinner was ready. Is this custom strictly observed by all classes in the community, at the present day?

Not very generally amongst the common people, nor in cities, where European manners have greatly modified the Oriental; but on Lebanon it still prevails. If a sheikh, beg, or emîr invites, he sends a servant at the proper time. This servant often repeats the formula mentioned in Luke xiv. 17: "Come; for all things are now ready," or the supper is ready. The fact that this custom is mainly confined to the wealthy and to the nobility is in agreement with the same parable, where the certain man "who made a great supper, and bade many," was presumably of that class.[1] It is true now, as then, that to refuse is an affront to the maker of the feast, nor would such excuses as those in the parable be more acceptable to a Druse emîr than they were to the lord of that "great supper;" very few, however, would manifest their displeasure by sending servants into the highways and hedges after the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. All those characters are found in the streets, and I have known rich men who exemplified the parable even in that particular; it was, however, as matter of ostentation, to show the extent of their benevolence, or the depth of their

[1] Luke xiv. 16.

A. SARGENT

SÛKED DELLÂLÎN—STREET OF THE AUCTIONEERS.



humility and condescension. Nevertheless, it is pleasant to find enough of that parable still practised to show that originally it was, in its details, in close conformity to the customs of this country.

Orientals certainly are far behind the day in almost every branch of domestic economy; especially is this noticeable in the absence of a dining-room, in the deficiency of their table furniture, and their primitive mode of eating.

The common custom, even of the better class, is to bring a polygon stool, about fourteen inches high, into the general sitting-room. On this is placed a tray of basket-work or of copper, upon which the food is arranged. The bread lies on the mat or upon the tray, and a cruise of water stands near by, from which all drink as they have need. On formal occasions this is held in the hand by a servant, who waits upon the guests. Around this stool and tray the guests gather, sitting on the floor. The rich have knives and forks, and even silver spoons; but they rarely use them.

This is a very meagre set-out, certainly.

It is all they want, and more convenient than our custom, and less expensive. High tables and chairs would not only be out of place, but in the way at all times. They do not have a dining-room, and hence they want furniture that can be easily brought in and removed. They eat out of the same dish, for it is within the reach of all. The dishes are composed generally of rice and stews, of beans, cracked wheat, or other vegetables, with leben or curdled milk, or salads, as the case may be, in deep dishes or bowls. Some use wooden or metal spoons for their boiled rice and thick stews, but the most common mode is to double up bits of the thin bread, and dip them into the dish. There is frequent reference to this custom in some of the most interesting and solemn scenes of the Bible. As the meat is always cut up in the stews, or else cooked until it is ready to fall to pieces, knives and forks are not necessary; and when they have chicken the flesh is easily torn to pieces with the fingers. Nor do they see any vulgarity in this. Polite Orientals will tear off the best bits, and either lay them on the guest's plate, or insist upon putting them into his mouth. I have had this done to me by fingers not particularly fair, or even clean.

Their customs demand much less labor than ours. If our sys-



SITTING AT MEAT—PARTY AT DINNER.

tem was introduced, and the females of the family—who do all the work—were required to carry it out, their labor would be increased tenfold. Not only must the dining-room be provided, but also entirely new furniture procured, and the table, table-linen, and chairs be kept clean and bright. Indeed, an entirely new and foreign

department must be instituted, and maintained under every disadvantage. Where this has been attempted in the native families, imitating European manners, it has generally proved a failure. The knives, forks, and spoons are rusty; the plates, dishes, and glasses ill assorted, dirty, badly arranged, and not sufficient in numbers; and the chairs and the table are rickety, and the cooking is the worst of all. The Arabs should retain their own dietetic regulations, at least until they are better prepared for a change. For their own needs their cooking is good, and their set-out respectable.



STOOL AND TRAY—PITCHER AND BASIN.

After such a meal as we have described, washing the hands is indispensable. The pitcher and basin are brought in, and the servant pours water over the hands of the guests, who dry them upon a napkin placed for the purpose on his shoulder.

If there is no servant, they perform this office for each other. Great men have those about them whose duty it is to pour water



WASHING THE HANDS.

on their hands. Thus it was in ancient times. One of the servants said to Jehoshaphat, "Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah."[1] It was a pitcher and basin

[1] 2 Kings iii. 11.

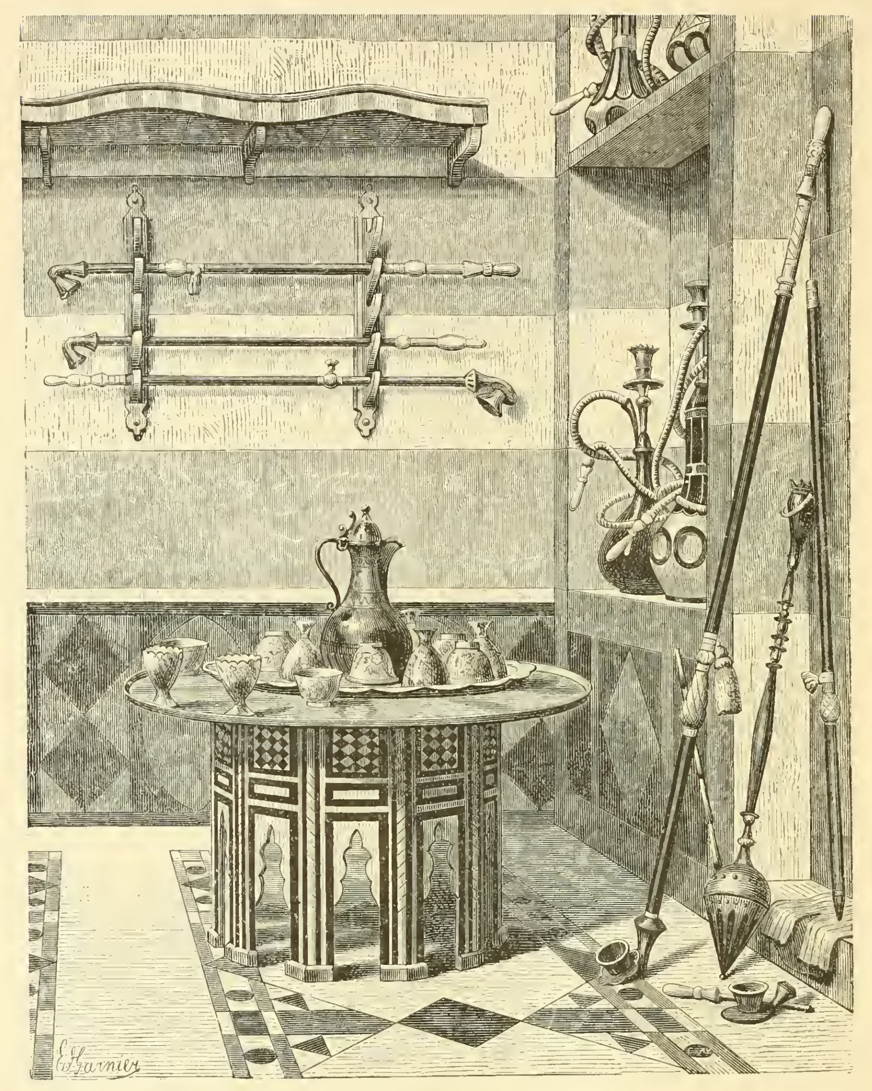
somewhat like the tûsht and ibrîck of this day, I suppose, that our Lord used at the close of the last supper with his disciples, when he girded himself with a napkin, and washed, not their hands, but their feet, and thus gave the most affecting lesson on humility the world has ever seen or heard.[1]

The invited friends of our host, who came in after dinner to spend the evening, belonged to some of the most intelligent and wealthy families of Beirût.

I begin to understand their "reunions," and have been much impressed with the graceful politeness observed even between intimate friends on such occasions. When one enters the room all rise to their feet, and stand steadfast and straight as palm-trees to receive him. The formal salâms are given and taken all round the room with the dignity of princes and the gravity of a court; and when the new-comer reaches his seat the ceremony is repeated, all sitting, in precisely the same words. In one of their full divans, therefore, a man gives and receives about fifty salâms before he is fairly seated and at his ease.

Then comes the formality of coffee-drinking and the social custom of smoking. Some use the extemporaneous cigarette. Others have pipes with long stems of cherry or other wood, ornamented with amber mouth-pieces of considerable value. The nargîleh, however, with its flexible tube of various-colored leather, seems to be the greatest favorite. The tube of the one brought to me the other evening was at least twelve feet long, of crimson leather, corded with silver wire; the bottle, with its plate, was very large, of thick cut-glass, inlaid with gold, really rich and beautiful. I, however, could produce no effect upon the water in the bottle. One needs a deep chest and great powers of inspiration to entice the smoke of the burning timbek down the tube, through the water, and along the coiled sinuosities of the snake-like nabrîdj; and yet I saw a lad make the water in the glass bubble like a boiling caldron without any apparent effort. The sipping of black coffee, from tiny cups, set in holders of china, brass, or silver and gold filigree, I like well enough, but not the fumigation. A cloud soon fills the room so dense that one can scarcely see, and I was

[1] John xiii. 4, 5.



PIPES, NARGÎLEHS, COFFEE-CUPS, AND TRAYS.

driven to the open court to escape suffocation. Another thing which surprises me is the vehemence of the speakers. Head and shoulders, hands and feet, the whole body, in fact, is wrought into violent action to emphasize their meaning. When fairly roused, all talk together at the top of their voices, and above anything of

the kind I have ever heard. Noticing my surprise, one said to me, "You talk as if you were afraid to be heard, and we as if we feared we should not be." I wonder how you can distinguish the words or comprehend a single sentence.

We are used to it; and, unless a stranger calls attention to that which has confounded you, we hardly notice it. I wish you could have understood the discussions the other evening, for they embraced some of those grand and impressive themes which can and ought to stir the deepest fountains of feeling in the human breast. The Arabs delight in such subjects.

My two young friends, who spoke English, kept me informed of the leading topics, and I was able to appreciate some of the remarks which so interested the company. We finally took a corner to ourselves, and compared Oriental and Occidental manners and customs. They maintained that we had invented and shaped ours on purpose to contradict theirs—theirs, the original; ours, copies reversed or caricatured. Of course, the weighty questions about beards, and mustaches, and shaved heads were duly discussed with respect to appearance, convenience, cleanliness, and health.

Escaping from the tangle of the beard, we fell into another about garments, long and short, tight and loose; and there they were confident of victory. Our clothes seem to them uncomfortable and inconvenient; and that is true, if we must sit as the Orientals do; but with chairs and sofas their objection has but little force, while for active life our fashions are far the best. Long, loose clothes are ever in the way, working, walking, or riding; and I suspect that they aid materially in producing that comparative inactivity which distinguishes Orientals from Occidentals. As to the mere matter of picturesqueness, we may admit their claim to some apparent superiority. The masters of the brush and the chisel, and the sons of song in every age and country, have so decreed, and it is vain to deny.

These matters of dress and costume have a certain Biblical interest, and therefore form a necessary part of our study. The garments of our first parents, in addition to their primary intention, had, as I believe, a typical significance. The skins with which those two sinners, penitent and reconciled, were clothed were, probably,

those of lambs offered in sacrifice, and they not obscurely symbolized the robes of righteousness purchased for penitent believers by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God on Calvary. And in many subsequent religious incidents and institutions garments are invested with a typical signification.

Such facts elevate the subject far above the category of mere trivialities. And, indeed, that cannot be a matter of indifference to the Christian student and philosopher in which all men, all women, all children, of every age and country, have felt, do, and will ever continue to feel, an absorbing interest, and upon which is expended an infinite amount of time, money, and labor. It would be a curious exercise of ingenuity to trace out the very gradual development of human costume, from the first fig-leaves and coats of skins to the complicated toilets of a highly-civilized society.

We, however, must restrict ourselves to the Bible. The list of garments is not extensive until the times of the later prophets—aprons of fig-leaves, man's first vain invention to hide the nakedness of sin. Coats of skin, given in mercy by our heavenly Father—cloaks, mantles, shirts, breeches, girdles, bonnets, and sandals, invented at various dates, and most of them consecrated to religious purposes by Moses in the garments of the Hebrew priesthood.

It is a remarkable fact, that after the first mention of coats in Genesis iii. 21, we hear no more about garments of any kind for sixteen or eighteen hundred years. Shem and Japheth, after the Deluge, had a garment so large that they laid it on their shoulders, in order to cover their father. Several hundred years later—in Abraham's day—we read of shoes, and of raiment presented to Rebekah; and she covered herself with a veil when Isaac met her. Later in life, she had goodly raiment of her son Esau with her in the house. Then comes the coat of many colors, the occasion of sad calamities to Joseph; Reuben, not finding the lad in the pit, rent his clothes—the first time this action is mentioned. Jacob also rent his; and, in after-ages, this expression of grief becomes common, and is so to this day, as the fabrics out of which the garments were made became of a finer texture, and more easily torn.

The materials first used were skins of animals, and some people are clothed with them at this day. Afterwards coarse cloth woven

from the hair of goats and camels was used, and linen, woollen, and cotton fabrics were introduced. Silk is mentioned in Genesis xli. 42, margin; Proverbs xxxi. 22, and in Ezekiel xvi. 10, 13, but I suppose "fine linen" was meant. There is no reason to believe that Solomon's "virtuous wife" was acquainted with the manufacture of silk; nor was cotton, probably, known to the Jews until the Captivity. The Egyptians, and of course the Hebrews, were early skilled in embroidery with tissue of silver and gold; and Orientals are still extravagantly fond of embroidered garments. The favorite colors, as every reader of the Bible knows, were blue, and purple, and scarlet, and the same taste prevails in Syria, and in Oriental countries generally, to this day.

The whole subject of garments and fabrics, shape and color, is much more obscure than most people suppose. The ancient Hebrew costume is thought to have resembled, more or less closely, the Oriental dress of our day. But which? We shall select that of the Syrian Arab and Bedawîn of the desert, which in all probability do approach nearest to that of the Hebrews; and by describing the various articles, as well as the ordinary mode of wearing them, their use will be sufficiently apparent. You need not attempt to remember, or even pronounce, the Arabic names; but it is difficult to talk about nameless things, and therefore we cannot dispense with these hard words.

LIST OF GARMENTS WORN BY SYRIAN ARABS AND BEDAWÎN.

Kŭmîs, a long shirt of cotton, linen, or silk. Those of the Bedawîn are made of cotton, the most important item in their wardrobe.

Libâs, drawers of cotton.

Shintiân, or Sherwâl, very full, loose trousers of cotton, linen, or cloth.

Dikky, a cord or sash of cotton or silk, with which the trousers are gathered and tied round the waist.

Suderîyeh, a waistcoat, without sleeves, buttoned up to the neck, of cotton, linen, cloth, silk, or velvet.

Mintiân, a jacket of cotton, linen, or cloth, with long sleeves, worn over the suderîyeh, overlapping in front, has pockets for purse and handkerchief.

Gumbâz, an open gown of cotton, silk, or cloth, with long sleeves, overlapping in front, girded tightly about the loins by the zŭnnâr.

Zŭnnâr, girdle of leather, cotton, silk, woollen, or camel's hair shawl.

Sŭlta, an outer jacket worn over the gŭmbâz.

Kŭbran, a heavy jacket of cotton, linen, or cloth, with open or slashed sleeves fastened by buttons.

Jibbeh, a long loose mantle of cotton or cloth, very full.

'Aba, 'Abaiyeh, Mashlah, a cloak, of various

forms and materials. It is often richly ornamented with gold and silver thread inwoven with the cloth. The most common is made long and full, of wool, goats' or camels' hair, so that the owner wraps himself in it to sleep.

Bûrnûs, long loose cloak of white wool, with a hood to cover the head.

For the head there is, first, the

Arkîyeh and Takîyeh, a cotton cap, fitting closely to the head, whether shaven or not. If the head is shaved, a soft felt cap is often worn under the takîyeh.

Tarbûsh, or Fez, a thick red felt cap. The best come from Algiers.

Laffeh, the Turban, a shawl of wool, cotton, or silk, wound around the tarbûsh. The Turks now wear nothing but the fez, and many Arabs only the tarbûsh, with its long tassel. Others have a small colored handkerchief or mandeîl tied round the tarbûsh. The Bedawîn wear the keffîyeh only, a party-colored handkerchief, woven with gold tissue, thrown over the head, and confined there by a twisted rope of goats' or camels' hair, called 'akâl. This is a picturesque and very distinctive article in the costume of an Arab of the Desert.

For the feet there is, first—

Jerabât and Kalsât, socks and stockings of every variety, and of all colors.

Kalshin, a slipper of soft morocco leather, red, yellow, or black.

Bâbûje, a half slipper, answering in part to the ancient sandal, which is not now used except by the Bedawîn of the desert.

Sŭrmaiyeh, a shoe, commonly of red morocco. Christian priests wear black shoes, but with Moslem sheikhs the favorite color is yellow.

Jezmah, a boot of red morocco, stout and clumsy.

There are variations and additions to this list in different regions inhabited by the Arab race; being, however, only slight departures from existing types and patterns, they need not be described.

To the Biblical student, these matters are interesting so far only as they throw light on the sacred Scriptures; and this they do in many passages. For example, it was the 'aba or mashlah, I suppose, with which Shem and Japheth covered their father.[1] Joseph's "coat of many colours" may have been the kŭmîs, or shirt, and is thus translated in the Arabic Bible.[2] It was the jibbeh, probably, that he left in the hands of the wife of Potiphar.[3] The 'Aba, or Mashlah, may represent the mantle which fell from Elijah, and was taken up by Elisha, or the cloak, in the precept, "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also."[4] It was possibly the jibbeh that our Saviour laid aside when he washed the feet of the disciples.[5] It can be so worn or taken off, and, like the suderîyeh, or waistcoat, rent in grief or rage, as to correspond with every allusion to such matters in the Bible. The same applies to the zŭnnâr or girdle, to the sŭrmaiyeh and bâbûj

[1] Gen. ix. 23. [2] Gen. xxxvii. 3, 23, 31. [3] Gen. xxxix. 12.
[4] 2 Kings ii. 8, 13; Matt. v. 40. [5] John xiii. 4, 5.

SYRIAN GENTLEMEN OF VARIOUS SECTS.



—the shoes and slippers—and, in fact, to all other articles of dress which we have described.

Let us turn philosophers while we look farther into Oriental manners, customs, and costumes. Search deep enough, and I believe you will generally find that the customs of a people are the result of two causes—necessity and compensation. The Oriental costume, for example, is light and loose, because the climate is warm. The natives do not sit on chairs, because they are hard and uncomfortable, and in this country a recumbent posture is required to insure rest and comfort. Under these circumstances, tight garments are very inconvenient and incongruous.

Then, as you observe, they scrupulously drop their boots, shoes, or slippers at the door when they enter a room, and keep on their head-dress. This seems strange to us, but it is necessary. As they sit on the mat, rug, or divan, with their feet under them, shoes would soil both couch and clothes, and, besides, would make a very uncomfortable seat. The demands of propriety and comfort introduced and enforced the custom of dropping the shoes at the entrance into the sitting-room, and it was thence extended to every place entitled to respect. From this to the idea of defilement from the shoe was but a step, and certain to be taken. Hence the strict requisition to put it off on entering sacred places of every kind. Muhammedans have preserved this idea in all its force, and none can enter their mosks or holy shrines with shoes on. This custom was probably established in Egypt before Moses was born, and he was trained up to regard it as obligatory. When, therefore, God appeared to him in the burning bush, he needed only to be reminded that the place whereon he stood was holy ground, to make the direction to put off his shoes at once intelligible and reasonable.[1]

Then the people keep their head-dress on, both because the shaven head requires to be concealed, and also for the sake of health. Always covered and closely shaved, the head becomes tender, and liable to colds on the least exposure. The shaving of the head, I suppose, had reference, originally, to cleanliness, and to avoid scab and other cutaneous diseases, which are generally prevalent, and difficult to cure. It is undoubtedly better to keep the head

[1] Exod. iii. 5.

clean and cool, and accustomed to bear change of temperature, with only the beautiful covering which God has spread over it. It is also best and most becoming to keep the feet covered and warm. But in this climate people do not often suffer from cold feet, and the requirements of decency are secured by concealing them under their loose garments. The ablutions which Muhammed required before public worship have as much reference to propriety as to spiritual or ceremonial purity. Becomingly dressed in loose, flowing robes, and thoroughly cleansed hands, feet, and face, their prayers are not only proper, but striking and solemn.

In the time of Moses "garments," I presume, had attained nearly their present form and shape amongst tribes purely Oriental; I mean as to pattern, not as to the number, nature, and quality of the materials. Those have greatly multiplied and improved, both in variety, skilful workmanship, fineness of fabric, and in the combination of brilliant colors.

The costume of the women corresponded in most respects, I suppose, to that of the men, with, of course, certain additions. As was to be expected, it developed faster than the other. Even during the life of Jacob there were garments appropriate to maidens, others to married women, and others again for widows. That implies a great variety in female attire; and it went on enlarging, until their toilets became as complicated and mysterious in Jerusalem as they now are in the capitals of Europe and America. In the third chapter of Isaiah we have a catalogue, about as intelligible to the English reader as the Hebrew seems to have been to our translators: "Cauls, round tires like the moon, chains or sweet balls, mufflers or spangled ornaments, tablets or houses of the soul,"[1] etc.

The female costume of the present day differs from that of the men mostly in the veils and in the head-dress, which, with the tarbûsh for the basis, is complicated by an endless variety of jewels and other ornamental appendages; these, however, you will not easily get permission to inspect, and to request it would be, in most cases, a serious affront.

The dress of Oriental women is not so complicated as that of European ladies, and shows more the shape of the person, and

[1] Isa. iii. 18–23.

they are not expected or allowed to mix in society with men, nor to be seen by them. Their in-door dress is not contrived to meet the demands of a public thoroughfare, and when they go abroad they are closely veiled from head to foot. The reasons—and such there are—for confining the women very much to their homes, and of closely veiling them when abroad, are found in the character and customs of Oriental people; and the veils cannot be safely abolished, nor their domestic regulations relaxed, until a pure and enlightened Christianity has prepared the way. When, therefore, you find few ladies to welcome and entertain you at your calls, and rarely see them in social gatherings, you may moderate your regret by the reflection that this is the result of a great moral necessity. The same necessity forbids an Arab to walk arm-in-arm with his wife. Neither does a man eat with his wife and daughters in many families, because the meal is in the public room, and often before strange men. So, also, the ladies are accommodated in church with a part railed off, and latticed, to shield them from public gaze. Moslem women seldom join in the prayers at the mosks.



HEAD-DRESS OF A SYRIAN LADY.

These customs are often carried to extremes by pride and jealousy, and then they are not only absurd, but unreasonable. For example, a Druse sheikh or wealthy Moslem, when he calls a physician for any of his harêm, makes a great mystery of the matter. The patient is closely veiled, and if the doctor insists upon seeing her tongue, there is much cautious manœuvring to avoid exposing the face. I have known cases where the tongue was thrust through

a rent in the veil made for the purpose. This is sufficiently absurd, and yet I am acquainted with sheikhs who carry these jealous precautions to a still more ridiculous extreme. They never allow their wives to go out of the harêm, or women's apartments, except at night, and not even then until servants are sent in advance to clear the roads, and forbid any man to approach.

The reluctance of even enlightened Christian men to speak of the females of their families is amusing to us, and certainly not very complimentary to the ladies. For example, according to the genuine old regime, a man, when absent from home, never writes to his wife, but to his son, if he have one, though not a month old; and often he addresses his letter to a fictitious son, whom, according to precedent, he imagines he has or ought to have.

This has its origin in the odd custom, that, when a man is married and has no son, the world gives him one by a courtesy peculiarly Oriental, and then calls him by his supposed son's name. Even unmarried men are often dignified by the honorable title of Abu somebody or other, the name bestowed being decided by that which he previously bore. Elias becomes Abu Nasîf, Butrus is called Abu Salim, and so on, according to the established custom of naming first-born sons. Thus Tannûs, the father of the infant Besharah, for example, is no longer Tannûs, but Abu Besharah, and this not merely on all occasions, but also in legal documents. It is, in fact, no longer respectful to call him Tannûs. So, also, the mother is ever afterwards called Um Besharah, mother of Besharah.

Nearly all Bible names were significant, and were conferred with reference to some circumstance connected with the birth of the child. Leah called her first-born Reuben—behold a son—"for she said, Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction;" the second was named Simeon—hearing—for the Lord had heard her prayer; and thus it was with Rachel in the case of her sons.[1]

That custom is still observed amongst the Arabs, and they have other names to which they are very partial. All sects join the name of God to one of his attributes or qualities, in order to give appropriate and significant names to their children. Thus, Fudle Allah—God's bounty; 'Abd Allah—servant of God. So the word

[1] Gen. xxix. 32, 33.



SYRIAN LADIES.



dîn—religion—enters into many favorite names, as Amîn ed Dîn—faithful in religion; Shems ed Dîn—sun of religion; Salâh ed Dîn—goodness of religion, contracted by us into Saladin, the antagonist of England's lion-hearted Richard, and the terror of Crusaders. And as the parents assume the names of their eldest son, we hear them addressed as the father or the mother of God's bounty, Abu or Um Fudle Allah, and the mother of the servant or slave of God, Um 'Abd Allah, or Um 'Abd el Kâdir.

For their daughters, the Arabs are fond of flowery and poetic names. We have all about us, amongst the rich and the poor, suns, stars, and moons, roses, lilies, and jessamines, diamonds and pearls, and other beautiful epithets; but the parents do not assume the names of their daughters.

There are many minor matters in which the East and the West are as far apart socially as they are geographically. For example, a whole family, parents, children, and servants, sleep in the same room, and with slight change of garments, or no change at all. Such customs are alluded to in the Bible. The latter is implied in the reason assigned by Moses for the return of a garment taken in pledge from a poor man before the sun goes down: "It is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep?"[1] and the former in the plea of the lazy man in the parable about importunity: "My children are with me in bed; I cannot arise and give thee."[2] The long, loose garments worn by these people remove, or at least mitigate, the impropriety of this practice; but, still, it is objectionable. So, also, a whole family continue to reside under the same roof, father, sons, and grandsons, in one common household. This also is ancient; but it is repugnant to our ideas, and has many disadvantages. Nor does the fact that they can live cheaper by such "co-operative" house-keeping compensate for the confusion and want of family government occasioned by the system. There never can be well-regulated households until this custom is so modified as to call forth greater personal responsibility and independence in the younger branches of the family.

Such customs we can excuse, but there are others which admit of no apology. They are degrading to both sexes. The Arabs

[1] Exod. xxii. 27. [2] Luke xi. 5–8.

have a word—"ajellack," an equivalent to "saving your reverence" —with which they preface the mention of anything offensive or unclean. Thus, ajellack a donkey, or a dog, or my shoes; so, when compelled to speak of their wives, they say, "ajellack my wife is so and so." These and similar expressions enable us to understand why it is that acquaintance before marriage is ordinarily out of the question. It could not be secured without revolutionizing an extended system of domestic regulations and compensations. Therefore the present plan of arranging matters matrimonial through the intervention of friends and relatives, as it was in times most remote, will be continued, with all its evils, until a change is brought about in the condition of the women. This can only be effected by a Christian education, and the elevation of the marriage relation.

Amongst both Moslems and Christians the birth of a son is always a joyful event in a family, but that of a daughter is often looked upon as a calamity. The father sometimes refuses to see his child, or speak to the mother; and the friends and relatives condole with the unfortunate husband. In those communities where divorce is permitted, that is often the only reason assigned by the husband for sending away his wife. This accounts for the desire which many wives manifest to become the mother of sons, not a whit less vehement than that of Rachel.[1] They make vows, as did Samuel's mother in Shiloh, when she was in bitterness of soul, and wept sore, and vowed a vow unto the Lord, and they also go on pilgrimages to shrines that have obtained a reputation in those matters.[2] The circumstance mentioned in Genesis xvi. 4, which made Hagar insolent towards her mistress, has the same effect now; and the devices which produced such heart-burnings in the families of the patriarchs, are equally mischievous at the present day. If the first wife has no children, the husband marries another or takes a slave. And it not unfrequently happens that the fortunate slave, when the mother of a son, is promoted to the post of honor and authority, and, of course, she becomes insolent towards her mistress.

[1] Gen. xxx. 1. [2] 1 Sam. i. 10, 11.

III.

THE DOG RIVER, AND THE SUBURBS OF BEIRÛT.

Excursion to the Dog River.—Eastern Suburbs of Beirût.—The View from Mâr Mitr.—The Reservoirs.—Chapel of St. George.—St. George and the Dragon.—The Quarantine.—The Beirût River.—Jebel Kenîseh and Sŭnnîn.—Bridge over Nahr Beirût.—Emîr Fukhr ed Dîn.—The Mulberry Gardens.—St. George's Bay.—Ride along the Beach.—The River of Death.—Ant Eliâs.—Narrow Plain.—Fountain and River of Ant Eliâs.—Beirût Water-works.—The Tunnel.—The Promontory of Nahr el Kelb.—The Ancient Road.—View from the Summit of the Pass.—A Roman Mile-stone.—Sculptured Tablets.—Egyptian Tablets Described by Wilkinson.—Layard's Opinion of the Assyrian Tablets.—Dr. Robinson's Observations on the Antiquity of the Tablets.—Greek Inscriptions.—Professor J. A. Paine.—Cuneiform Inscription.—Napoleon III.—The Dog, and the Rock in the Sea.—Inscription of Marcus Antoninus.—The Greek "Wolf" and the Arab "Dog."—Inscription of Sultân Salîm.—Scenery of Nahr el Kelb.—A Wild Cabbage.—Bone and Flint Deposits.—Canon Tristram.—Mr. Dawkins.—Fossil Teeth and Arrow-heads.—Prehistoric Savages.—Lebanon abounds in Caverns, Fossils, and Minerals.—Visit to the Caverns of Nahr el Kelb in 1836.—The Caverns Explored by Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Huxley in 1873.—Description of the Caverns of the Dog River.—The Screen.—Professor Robertson's Account.—The Cathedral.—Maxwell's Column.—The Hermit's Pillar.—The Gallery.—The Dome.—Willow-point and Light-house.—The Elephant's Cave.—Bliss's Straits.—The Draperies.—The Pantheon.—Clayton's Passage.—The Styx.—Rustum Pasha's Chandelier.—Chaos.—Huxley and Brigstocke's Rapids.—Personal Incident.—Attempt to Explore the Caverns above the Rapids Described by Professor Robertson.—Temperature of the Air and Water in the Caverns.—Depth of the Water.—The Caves of Nahr el Kelb compared with Celebrated Caverns in other Countries.—Ride up the River Gorge.—The Aqueduct.—Grand and Picturesque Scenery.—The Weir.—The Road over the Tunnel and to the Sea.—Ride around the Western Suburbs of Beirût.—The Barracks and Hospital.—The Capuchin Monastery and Church.—Institute of the Deaconesses.—German Church.—Khân Antûn Beg.—Ottoman Bank.—Consulates.—Post-offices.—Moslem Cemetery.—Hotels.—Remains of Ancient Baths.—Modern Bathing-houses.—Minat el Hŭsn.—Sponge Divers.—Petroleum Warehouses.—Ship-building Yard.—Potteries and Tanneries.—Inhabited Well.—The Hospital of St. John.—The Medical Hall.—Syrian Protestant College.—Lee Observatory.—Unequalled Site and Magnificent Prospect.—Jackals and Hyenas.—The Light-house.—Extended Outlook.—French Company.—Numerous Inlets.—Deep Caverns.—Seals or Sea-cows.—The Rousha.—Perpendicular

Cliffs.—Ibrahim Pasha.—The Conscription.—Refugees.—Fugitives in the Caves and on the Rousha.—The Rousha in a Winter Storm.—Petrified Echini in the Rocks.—The Sand Sea.—Gardens and Houses Overwhelmed by the Sand.—Woe-begone Donkeys.—The Quarries.—Narrow Lanes.—Prickly-pear Hedges.—Fruit of the Prickly-pear.—Pine-groves.—Sowing the Pine.—Venerable Pine-trees Planted by Fukhr ed Dîn.—The Sycamore.—Zaccheus.—Sycamore Figs.—Gatherers of Sycamore Fruit.—The Power of Faith Illustrated by the Sycamore.—The Black Mulberry.—The Sycamore in Egypt.—Biblical References to the Sycamore.—'Assûr.—The Cemetery.—The Press.—The Bible Warehouse.—Anglo-American Church.—Female Seminary.—Mecca Pilgrims.—Fanatical Moslem Dervishes and the Priest of Baal.—The Douseh.—Riding over Prostrate Men and Boys.

June 2d.

THE cool breeze from the sea this morning renders our ride to the Dog River very pleasant.

We have been passing for half an hour through the eastern suburbs of Beirût, and appear to be still within the limits of the town.

From the top of that hill, called Mâr Mitr, the very best view of the city, the surroundings, and the boundless sea to the north and west, is obtained. Early in the morning, and late in the afternoon, that beautiful prospect is seen to the best advantage. At the foot of the hill is the main reservoir which receives the water brought to the city from the Dog River, a distance of about ten miles. The water is also forced up a steep incline to the top of the hill, where there is another reservoir, and from that it is distributed through the suburbs and about the city.

These fragments of old buttresses on the roadside are said to be the remains of the traditional chapel of St. George, the tutelary saint of England, and they are associated with that fabulous exploit of his which gave to Beirût its greatest glory in the days of legendary lore. Here it is believed that St. George washed his hands after slaying the dragon, and the deep bay of St. George down yonder owes its name to that contest on its shores. There it was that St. George killed the dragon; exactly when, or what particular dragon, is not known, but he must have killed him, for he has not been seen since, and all agree that he is dead. In the gardens, to the north-east of those old buttresses, near a dilapidated mosk, probably built on the actual site of the chapel, is an old pit or well, into which the slain monster was cast. The place is now in the hands of the Moslems.

Those extensive buildings covering that rocky promontory, whose cliffs descend almost perpendicularly into the sea, belong to the Quarantine department. I have a vivid recollection of the dangers and discomforts of repeated imprisonments there with plague-stricken patients in alarming proximity. The plague has long since been extirpated, and the quarantine buildings are now rarely used except for military purposes.

This is the Beirût River, I suppose, which you have mentioned in connection with the ruined aqueduct?

It is also the ancient Magoras, and its main permanent source is a remitting fountain in the bed of the stream below Deir el Kŭl'ah. The river drains a portion of the plain, and that magnificent sweep of lofty mountains, including Jebel Kenîseh and Sŭnnîn—a wild and wooded region abounding in scenery of great natural beauty. Nahr Beirût, as you see, has a wide channel, requiring this long bridge of seven arches, with broad and massive piers, to cross it. The bridge is said to have been built by the Emîr Fakhr ed Dîn, but he probably only repaired a more ancient one. The amount of water is now very small, but in the rainy season the shallow stream is swollen to a broad and turbid river, sweeping everything before it, and giving to the water of the bay for miles out to sea a pale red color.

A ride of nearly half an hour, through the most flourishing mulberry gardens we have yet seen, has brought us out upon the sandy shore, near this dismantled wreck.

St. George's Bay affords comparative shelter to vessels, and is the safest anchorage for ships on this coast, from Egypt to Asia Minor. Still, many foreign vessels, and untold numbers of native craft, have been cast high and dry upon this beach during exceptionally severe storms in winter.

For an hour or more we can ride along the beach, with these noisy wavelets tumbling over the feet of the horses, and the light surf occasionally wetting our own. But both they and we prefer the dull, unchanging monotony of this restless sea to the weary plodding through the deep sand just above the shore.

That ravine on our right is the dry bed of Nahr el Maut, the River of Death. Its source is in those mountains below the vil-

lage of Brummâna, and, descending to the plain, it has hardly the strength to force its way through the sand to the sea; hence this stagnant and unhealthy region near its mouth, and thence, also, its very significant and ominous name.

This village straggling along the foot-hills of Lebanon is Ant Eliâs; and the narrow stretch of plain between it and the sea is covered with mulberry and vegetable gardens, and even fruit-trees. The fountain of this river of Ant Eliâs, which we are now crossing, bursts forth from the roots of the mountain, but not at a sufficient elevation to carry its life-giving contributions to all parts of the plain. As it is a never-failing fountain, and very copious, its waters drive a number of mills, where most of the wheat is ground that supplies the flour dealers of Beirût.

It is a grateful change to see those green and waving wheat-fields, and to leave the deep, tiresome sand and the deafening surf, and tread the firm earth once more.

These low buildings, on our right, were erected a few years ago by the Beirût Water-works Company; and there is the machinery which forces the water around the bay, under the Beirût River, and up to the reservoir on Mâr Mitr—a distance of over six miles. The water from the Dog River is brought through the mountain ridge by a tunnel half a mile long, and that portion of it which is used to drive the machinery runs uselessly away into the sea below. I was present when the water was turned on, and witnessed the first revolution of the wheels that now force it through so many miles of iron pipe up to the reservoir.

Over that rocky promontory ahead of us, which juts out into the sea for about half a mile, is the famous pass of Nahr el Kelb, cut in the rock at an elevation of more than a hundred feet above the water. The pavement of this ancient road is so execrable that timid riders prefer to walk. Our nerves, however, are sufficiently educated to allow us to retain our place in the saddle even when descending to the river on the other side of the pass, where the winding way—a succession of broad, rough, and slippery steps—is really dangerous to the horse and his rider.

We are now on the summit of the pass, and can rest a while, and enjoy this extensive and varied prospect of rugged mountains

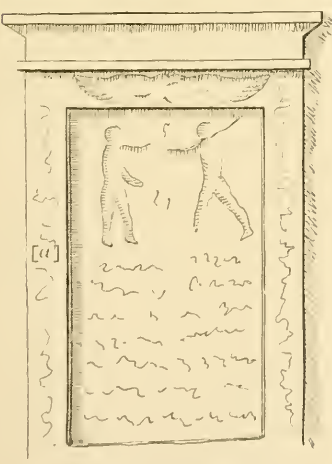
and fruitful plains, the river gorge, the crescent-shaped bay, the distant city, and the boundless expanse of this great and wide sea.



ASSYRIAN TABLET, WITH CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTION.

Here, by the roadside, on this fragment of a granite column, probably a Roman mile-stone, is a brief, half-defaced Latin inscription, and there are others, still more obliterated, cut into the limestone rock of the cliff. The most ancient roadway was much higher up the pass than the present one, and in the face of the rock above it are those remarkable sculptured tablets of the Egyptians and Assyrians, probably commemorating their presence here, and their passage over this formidable and rocky promontory.

The Egyptian tablets are so worn away by time that they are not easily decipherable. The Assyrian warriors are life size, and represented in military costume. They are in better preservation, and a considerable part of one of them is covered with a long cuneiform inscription, enough of which remains legible to enable the expert in such matters to form an opinion of its general tenor.



EGYPTIAN TABLET, WITH SUPPOSED HIEROGLYPHICS.

Regarding the Egyptian sculptured tablets, Sir J. G. Wilkinson supposes that the stelæ seen by Herodotus in Syria



HIEROGLYPHICS AND FIGURES.

were doubtless those on the rock near Berytus [Beirût], at the mouth of the Lyçus [Dog River], engraved by Rameses II. [Sesostris].[1] One is dedicated to Ra, another to Ammon, and a third to Phtha. Almost the only hieroglyphics now traceable are on the jambs of the tablets, which have one of the usual formulas: "The good god [Pharaoh], the powerful king of kings, Rameses; to whom life has been given like the sun." But the lines below the figure of the king, who slays the foreign chiefs before the god, and which should contain the mention of his victories, are too indistinct, and so greatly defaced as to be entirely illegible.

The Assyrian tablets Mr. Layard regards as all referring to Sennacherib, the king who built the palace at Kouyunjik, and whose army of one hundred and eighty-five thousand men was smitten in the night by "the angel of the Lord."[2]

Altogether there are three Egyptian tablets, and six Assyrian. "Looking back from our day," says Dr. Robinson, "the Assyrian tablets have continued to commemorate the progress of the Assyrian hosts for more than five-and-twenty centuries; while the Egyptian, if proceeding from Sesostris, have celebrated his prowess for thirty-one centuries. They reach back to hoary antiquity, even to the earliest days of the Judges of Israel, before Jerusalem was known."[3] Certainly a very interesting and impressive statement.

Professor J. A. Paine, of the American Palestine Exploration Society, "discovered three Greek inscriptions, one on a stone in a Roman wall, and two cut in the rock." According to his interpretation it would appear that the Phœnicians first made this road, and that the Romans afterwards repaired portions of it. Across the river, on the face of the cliff, above the road, and below the canal that conducts the water to the mills, a long cuneiform inscription has been discovered recently by Mr. J. Loytved, Danish vice-consul, but its purport has not yet been ascertained. We must not forget to mention that the Emperor Napoleon III. appropriated one of the Egyptian tablets, and caused to be engraved thereon an inscription commemorating the occupation of the Lebanon district by a French army in 1860, after the massacres of that year.

[1] Notes on Herodotus, vol. ii., p. 158.
[2] 2 Kings xix. 35, 36.
[3] Rob. Res., vol. iii. p. 622.

Let us now descend to the khân at the foot of the pass, where we can lunch and admire at our leisure the extraordinary scenery of this imposing gorge or deep chasm between the mountains.

That rock, lying in the sea below us, and constantly washed by the waves, has a fanciful resemblance to the body of a dog, and native tradition ascribes to it the origin of the name Nahr el Kelb, the Dog River. It is supposed to be the image of a dog that once stood upon a pedestal at the head of the pass. On the face of this rock, above the road to our right, is the Latin inscription of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. From which it appears that, in the latter part of the second century, at the time when the Roman Emperor made or mended this road, the river was called Lycus. Account for it as we may, it is certain that since then the Greek "Wolf" has disappeared and given place to the Arab "Dog."

On these low cliffs above the road, near the bridge, is a much defaced Saracen inscription. The caligraphy of what remains is so involved that not even the most skilful native scholars can decipher more than that Sultân Selîm repaired this bridge.

This scene is altogether unique — the perpendicular cliffs on either side towering to the sky, with the river and the bridge between; those ancient roadways, overhanging the sea, and winding zigzag up the rocky pass; the remarkable tablets, with their unsolved hieroglyphics, and stern warriors clad in coats of mail—all these fascinate the imagination, and, with the lofty mountains, the running stream, the rolling sea, and the fleeting clouds, form a vision as wild as it is picturesque and romantic.

I once attempted to ascend to the top of the cliffs on the southern side, but failed, and was obliged to descend—a much more difficult feat. I was not altogether unrewarded, for I found a veritable cabbage bush, growing out of a crevice in the rock, half-way up the pass. Leaf, color, smell, and taste were unmistakably cabbage; but the stalk was slender and woody, and about three feet high.

Several bone and flint deposits have been found on this promontory. The bones are embedded in two different formations; one a soft, tufaceous deposit, along the cliffs on the west side of the pass, and just before the ascent begins; the other a hard, stalagmitic floor, probably of an old cavern, on the top and over the

centre of the pass. Canon Tristram, who first discovered the formation, submitted specimens of the deposit to W. B. Dawkins, Esq., of the Geological Survey of England, who determined the teeth of an ox resembling the Bos primigenius, and others were assigned to the reindeer and elk. Such are the facts, briefly stated.

That they are the teeth and bones of animals is certain, and they were probably brought there gradually, during the ages in which those deposits were forming, for they are mingled with flint chippings. The flint chips are innumerable, and vary in size from a finger-nail to an average hand. I picked up a well-shaped spear-head, and found flints which seem to have been intended for arrow-heads. They were, however, far less perfect than Indian arrow-heads. I have collected hundreds of those specimens in America.

Those flints present a most obscure problem to solve connected with this locality. We may imagine that prehistoric savages selected this easily defended cape for their permanent home, and that they pointed their spears and arrows with flint; and consequently there would be brought to this locality great quantities to be manufactured into weapons. Whether this be so or not, it is certain that the Lebanon abounds in caverns, fossils, and minerals of various kinds, and will well repay more thorough and scientific exploration than has hitherto been bestowed upon it. I have been told that there are other bone deposits higher up in the river gorge, and also that bones have been discovered in the caves out of which the river itself flows.

How far are those caves from this bridge?

About four miles. I have been there several times; and, while seated in this cool shade, I will give you a description of them. My first visit was made in September, in the year 1836. Having heard from the natives vague accounts of those caverns, I determined to find and explore them. Mr. Hebard was my companion; and as we were to penetrate into regions then unknown, the excursion had all the excitement of first discovery.

Where the river gorge turns to the south the ravine becomes too narrow, wild, and rocky for any but a goat-path, and the road to the caves leads over the steep shoulder of the mountain on the north side for an hour and a half. It then descends by a very

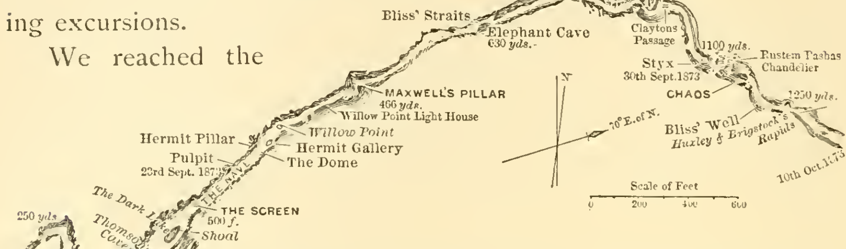
slippery track to the river, in the immediate vicinity of the caves. There are three of them, and all on the north side of the ravine. Out of the first gushes a large part of the river, but without a boat it cannot be explored. A few rods farther up the valley is the second cave. It runs under the mountain in a straight line for eighty paces, and then descends into an abyss of water. On the west side of the main entrance is a passage parallel to the cave, and of about the same dimensions, with which it communicates by a large aperture. This tunnel trends round to the west, and unites with the first or lower cave near its mouth. Strike or jump on the floor of the passage, and one is startled by a dull, hollow sound beneath, and inclined to walk softly over such unknown depths.

About forty rods higher up the ravine is the third and largest cave. The entrance to it is a wide and low opening in the face of the rock, and is so concealed by large rocks that one might pass within a few feet of it without suspecting its existence. Soon the passage becomes high enough to walk erect, and turns round towards the west. Torches are necessary, as the interior of the cave is utterly dark. A gallery runs round three sides of it, and the river, which crosses the lower part of the cavern, disappears at the north-west corner with a loud noise. At the north-east, where it enters the cave, there is a pool of water, clear and smooth as a mirror, and deliciously cool. How far the cavern extended under the mountain I had no means of ascertaining. I fired a gun there; the echoes were loud and oft-repeated. That cave abounds in stalactites and stalagmites, some of which are of great size, reaching from the roof to the floor, and were grooved like fluted columns. They also hang like inverted candles from the roof above the pool. I longed for a boat to explore the mysteries of those dark and watery labyrinths, and to discover the hidden sources of the river itself.

This, in brief, is what I saw in those caverns, about forty-five years ago. Long after that I had my desire gratified to examine them more carefully. In September, 1873, Messrs. Maxwell and Huxley, agents and engineers of the company organized in London to supply Beirût with water from the Dog River, resolved to explore the caves, and, after overcoming many difficulties, they finally succeeded. They had small boats, or rafts, made in the lower cave,

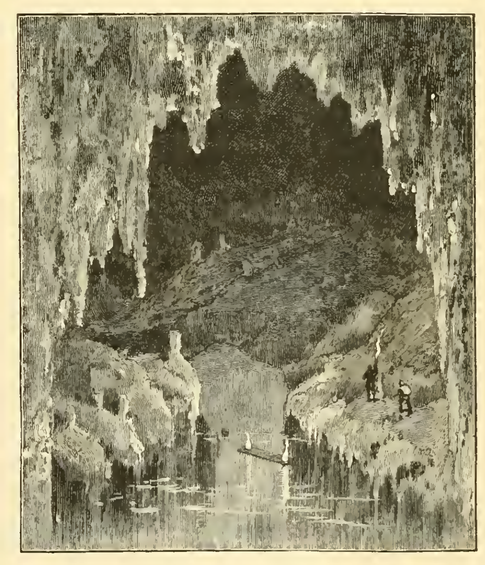
and by their aid soon became familiar with its intricacies. I was invited to accompany the party, consisting of Mr. Huxley, Dr. Brigstocke, and Mr. Parker, on one of their exploring excursions.

We reached the entrance of the cavern at ten o'clock, and descending to the river, which crosses the cave, as described in the account of my first visit, we were quickly paddled, in a low boat, up to the rock called the Screen. The Screen is one mass of rock, that appears to have fallen from the roof above, and completely blocks up the narrow passage of the river, allowing the water to pass beneath it. It is about fifteen feet high, smooth and slippery, and it was with some difficulty that we climbed to the top, and descended on the other side to where the boats were in which our excursion was to be made.



MAP OF THE GROTTOES.

Up to the Screen there was nothing very striking to be observed, except the grand vault that spanned the deep and still waters of the Dark Lake, as the explorers call it. Numerous stalactites hung from the roof of the vault, and the cool and clear water was



THE SCREEN.

twenty feet deep on the lower side of the Screen. Above the Screen a great cavern extends in the same general direction, nearly north-east, farther than our lamps and candles enabled us to see. This was called the Cathedral by those who first discovered it—a party consisting of Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Huxley, of the Water-works Company; Dr. Bliss, President of the Syrian Protestant College; and Dr. Brigstocke, formerly of the Royal Navy.

In a description of those caverns, written by Professor James Robertson, of the University, Glasgow, he says: "These four, to use their own words, 'bound themselves in a solemn league that they would either explore some of the mysteries mentioned by Dr. Thomson, or show that no other man could.'" When the party had, with great difficulty, scaled the top of the Screen, they "could discern, by the dim light of their candles, that they were in the presence of a continuation of the cavern, of much vaster proportions than they could have anticipated. Groping his way along the lofty ledge, Mr. Maxwell reached a projecting point at the farther end; and as he fixed his candle, and took out his note-book and compass for observation, his position at once suggested to his companions the pulpit in a great cathedral, the screen of which was the barrier of rock which they had just surmounted."

"A magnesium wire was ignited, and the beauties of this subterranean temple of Nature's workmanship burst upon their view. The floor was a lake of purest water, whose reflection intensified the brightness of a roof and walls glistening and sparkling as with a million of gems. In the words of one of the party, 'from the lofty vaulted roof and precipitous sides hung massive stalactites, between which the rocks were studded with others of a more slender and graceful shape, while from below shot up in wild profusion stalagmites which towered aloft, in some cases almost reaching their pendent companions.'"[1]

From the Cathedral onwards the cavern has an average width of forty feet; but the roof was too high, in most places, to be seen by the aid of our brightest lights. There are many strangely shaped galleries on either side, and stalactites and stalagmites of every possible hue, from jet black to pure white, and of every size,

[1] Good Words, November, 1875, pp. 770, 771.


MAXWELL'S COLUMN.

from that of a candle up to Maxwell's Column, which is fifty-five feet in circumference, and rises over sixty feet to the lofty vault above.

That splendid column, "standing out in bold relief, with fine fluted front, and continued to the rear in a mass of pendent drapery, like a great curtain let down in graceful folds from the roof," is an eminently appropriate monument to the leader of that exploring party. It is four hundred yards from the Pulpit, and between them is the Hermit's Pillar, and on the opposite side is the Hermit's Gallery. The lofty roof is called the Dome. Then follows Willow Point, a wonderful stalactite group resembling the drooping branches of that tree; and near to it is Willow Point Light-house. About two hundred yards farther on is the Elephant's Cave, beyond which is Bliss' Straits, the narrowest and most intricate part of the cavern. Some three hundred yards farther eastward is an extraordinary display of pendent stalactites called the Draperies.


THE PANTHEON.

"Still another two hundred yards, and the explor-

ers, now more than half a mile under ground, find themselves in a spacious cavern, whose roof is lost in the gloom. Under this dome, standing out clear as alabaster in the midst of the darkness, is one of the most beautiful stalagmite formations of the grottoes, which, from its resemblance to the Pantheon, has been distinguished by that name." Not far from it, where the cavern is narrow, and the roof very low, is Clayton's Passage. "Instead of the former dazzling whiteness, the walls of the cavern now presented a dull, dark appearance, as if coated over with pitch, and suggested for the waters the name of the Styx." A peculiar cluster of stalactites is called Rustum Pasha's Chandelier, in honor of the Governor-general of Lebanon.



CHAOS.

Above the place where the water shoals, and the boat was brought to land, there were bowlders and large fragments of rock, as black as Erebus, piled up in one confused mass; hence the name Chaos. Through that débris the river finds its way from above, but how it enters the pool, or the Styx, we could not discover.

After lunch we climbed up the slippery rocks of Chaos with great caution, each of us having a long stick in one hand, to steady ourselves by, and a lighted candle in the other, to show where we could safely plant our feet. Finally, we came to Huxley and Brigstocke's Rapids, where the river rushes down to and amongst the chaotic mass of rocks below. We groped our way with difficulty, some on one side, some on the other. The stream is there very narrow, and, in attempting to leap to the opposite bank, I fell in and had to swim out. Though we reached a point where the river

again expands into an upper lake, there was no practicable passage along its banks, and we were obliged to retrace our steps to our boats at the lower end of Chaos.

The mystery of the upper lake and cavern remains yet to be solved. Professor Robertson informs us that "in the autumn of the following year [1874] three of the party attempted to find out what lay beyond, and for this purpose provided themselves with a small boat, which they carried in pieces, and put together on the rocks at the foot of the cataract. But, owing to a severe winter, the water was found running at double the speed of the previous year, and it was evident their frail craft could not live in such a torrent. All they could do, by scrambling a few yards along the slippery face of the rock, was to observe that there was smooth water and no sound on the other side; but future explorers must have the credit of making known what lies beyond Huxley and Brigstocke's Rapids."[1]

The temperature of the atmosphere in the cave was sixty-two degrees, the air pure and sweet, and that of the water sixty degrees. In some places, where the cavern is broad, the water is not more than two feet deep; in other parts the depth is twenty, or even thirty feet. Though I was for several hours in clothes wet as water could make them, I experienced no inconvenience. We emerged from the mouth of the cavern after sunset, having been underground about eight hours.

Professor Robertson closes his account of the grottoes of Nahr el Kelb with the remark that, "though for size not to be mentioned in the same breath with the Kentucky Caves, they possess features resembling those of that immense labyrinth. And though devoid of animal remains, they will bear comparison with any of the bone caves in the gorgeousness of their draperies and the grandeur of their stalactites. The caves of Derbyshire will bear no comparison with them. Adelsberg has been explored to a greater length; but the distinctive feature of the Dog River caves is that the river itself has been followed three-fourths of a mile underground; for from Thomson's Cavern to the Rapids there was no perceptible increase or diminution of the waters."[2]

[1] Good Words, November, 1875, p. 773. [2] Good Words, November, 1875, p. 773.

Instead of returning to Beirût by the way we came, we will pass up the river to the Weir, constructed by the Water-works Company to turn so much of the stream as was needed into their aqueduct. This détour will afford a good view of the wild, rocky scenery in one of the most striking specimens of a picturesque river gorge to be found even on goodly Lebanon.

That aqueduct, on the other side of the river, appears to be carried along the very face of the perpendicular rock overhanging the north bank of the stream; and the oleander bushes that border its course, the feathery tufts of the waving cane, and the festoons of pendent creepers that fringe its winding way are all very beautiful.

It conveys the water of the river to the mills both above and below the bridge. From a point a short distance beyond this the view westward of the aqueduct and the mills, the river and the bridge, the rocky roadway zigzagging over the pass, and the far-off sea, presents a picture of more than ordinary attractions to the tourist and the artist. As we advance up the glen the cliffs on either side become more lofty and imposing; pine-groves creep up the mountain-side, and here and there a Maronite convent crowns the summit of the gray crags. The admirer of grand and romantic scenery will be amply rewarded for the loss of time, and the trouble it will cost in order to reach the Weir.

The magnificent mountain scenery above and around this weir makes it the most picturesque dam we have seen in the country, and the strongest and best built.

The engineers of the Water-works Company desired to take the water direct from the caverns, but the land there belongs to the owners of the mills below the mouth of the first cave. They would not sell their rights upon any terms, and the present aqueduct was necessarily commenced much lower down the river. The engineers found great difficulty in constructing a dam capable of resisting the winter floods, but they have succeeded, and Beirût is now provided from here with the pure water of the Dog River.

We must return for some distance by the same watery way, along the bank and through the river, until we can turn out of the bed of the stream into the road over the promontory of Nahr el Kelb made by the engineers of the company. It follows the line

of the tunnel through the mountain, and there are shafts sunk at intervals to the water below. We will reach the sea near the works which they constructed to force the water through the iron pipes up to the reservoir on the top of Mâr Mitr, that hill above the road which we noticed in passing this morning.

And now that we are by the sad sea waves once more we may vary the monotony of this tedious ride by a long canter over the beach; and a brisk pace through the mulberry gardens will bring us to our home about sunset, in the cool of the evening.

June 5th.

Beirût has spread so extensively in every direction over the Râs, or cape, and through the mulberry gardens, that one must ride around it before he can form any adequate idea of the place. Our horses are ready, and this morning we will descend directly to the sea-shore by the French road that passes along the west side of the old town, near the line of the ancient wall.

These extensive buildings on our left are the Government barracks and the hospital; and this edifice across the way is the Capuchin monastery and church, built against a portion of the former land castle of Beirût in this vicinity.

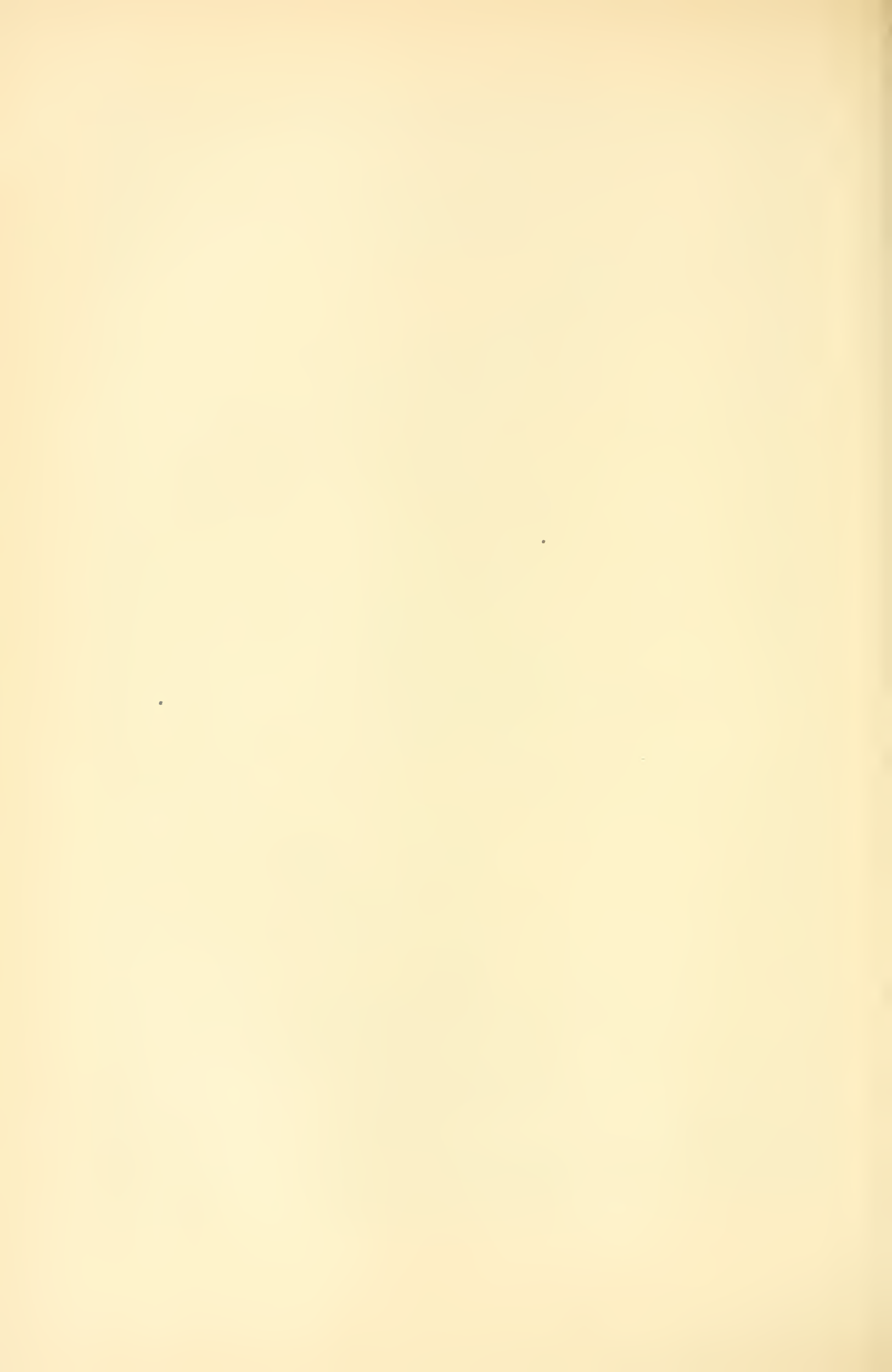
The broad road on our left leads westward along the ridge to Râs Beirût, and that large establishment on the north side of it, surrounded by a high wall, and embowered in trees, is the institute and high school of the Prussian Deaconesses of Kaiserwerth, and there also is the German church.

A short distance down that narrow street is Khân Antûn Beg, the most attractive public building in Beirût. Private families occupy the upper stories, and merchants have offices and warehouses in the lower portions. The Imperial Ottoman Bank and the Consulates and post-offices of several foreign countries are also located there. Here on the right is a Moslem cemetery, occupying an exceedingly valuable site for business purposes; and there, above the sea and the road, and commanding a fine prospect of the bay and the mountains, are some of the principal hotels of the place.

The shore, I perceive, is quite irregular, rocky and precipitous in some parts, having numerous coves and indentations which may have been utilized as harbors in ancient times.



THE WEIR ACROSS NAHR EL KELB.



They, no doubt, were; and this rubble-work, these old foundations, and those excavations in the rock are, probably, the remains of ancient baths, and places of public resort. . They must have been as generally frequented as their miserable successors, constructed of wood and covered over with mats, are at this day.

This inlet, larger and better protected than the rest, is Mînat Husein, commonly called Mînat el Hŭsn, "the beautiful harbor;" but the water is not deep enough for ships, and its accommodations are very limited. Even these picturesque Greek sloops, or "sponge divers," as they are styled, now riding at anchor so closely and quietly there, would be dashed to pieces during the winter storms. These low warehouses are mainly used for the storage of cargoes of petroleum from America, or of coal for the steamers. And on the point opposite that coffee-shop is the ship-building yard, where vessels of small tonnage are repaired, and new ones constructed after the model and rig of the old-fashioned bomb-ketch.

Here are the potteries and tanneries, but as we have seen the same industries at Jaffa, Gaza, and elsewhere we need not turn aside to examine them. These steps cut in the rock lead down, as you perceive, to the water in this well. It is "inhabited" by a saint or a demon, I am not certain which. At any rate, either the well or the spirit, or both, are "possessed" of healing virtues, for the walls are sometimes dimly illuminated with burning rag-wicks in small oil-lamps, votive offerings to the genius of the place.

That building on the hill is the Hospital of St. John, and is in charge of the Prussian Deaconesses of Kaiserwerth. These on the ridge above us are, first, the Medical Hall of the Syrian Protestant College; then the College itself, and next to it is the house of the President. Beyond that, and advantageously situated on a projecting spur of the main ridge, which descends steeply to the sea, is the Lee Observatory, erected in part by the gift of the Hon. Henry Lee, M.P., of Manchester, England.

They occupy a conspicuous position, and must command a magnificent prospect far out to sea, over the city, across the bay, and up to the lofty summit of Lebanon.

There is no site equal to it at the head of the Mediterranean, and the extensive grounds are becoming more attractive. Fine

houses are being built in this neighborhood, the residences mostly of Europeans and Americans. When I first came to this country there was not a house on all the cape above us. I have seen not only foxes and jackals but hyenas also prowling about amongst the rocks. The former have almost entirely withdrawn to the mountains, and are now rarely seen or heard in this region, and the latter have long since disappeared.

We will continue our ride westward for half an hour, along the shore, to Râs Beirût, at the extreme end of the cape.

There is the light-house, I suppose, so welcome to the eyes of sailors approaching this cape on a dark and stormy night?

It is called el Fanâr, and it commands an extended outlook over the sea—north as far as Râs esh Shŭkah, or Theoprosopon, and southward down to the Ladder of Tyre, a distance of more than eighty miles; while the outlook westward over this "great and wide sea" is boundless. The light-house system on this coast is in the hands of a French company.

These numerous inlets are quite peculiar, and seem as though made specially to enable fishermen to reach the land along this rocky shore, as appears from these small boats anchored in them.

Some of them lead into extensive caverns. I have often brought my boat into the inlet above which we are now standing, and landed in the deep and dark cave beneath our feet. There are several other caverns in these bold and precipitous cliffs, which can be easily entered and explored in a boat when the water is calm. Aside, however, from the fact that they have been formed by the action of the waves, there is nothing within them of special interest to see or to discover. Pigeons and swallows are generally seen flying in or out of these caves, and on one occasion I was startled and astonished by the floundering past me of two seals, or sea-cows, as they are called by the natives. They must have entirely lost their reckoning and been driven upon these shores by the winter storms, and had taken refuge in one of the caves. Some fishermen subsequently caught one of them, and it was exhibited to wondering crowds in the market-place of the city.

There is the Rousha. Those two gigantic and weather-beaten crags, the last remnant of the old coast line, stand out alone in grim



ER ROUSHA—PIGEON ISLAND.

isolation, as if in defiance of the elements that have overthrown and swept away all that once rose above this tumultuous sea, and connected them with the main-land. The rock of which they are composed, being harder and more compact, has resisted the action of the water, while all east of them has been washed away, and the waves now break against the perpendicular cliffs in wild commotion. It is possible that this semicircular and rock-bound bay at our feet was once covered by a series of deep and lofty caverns, the superincumbent roof of which was shaken down by earthquakes, and the fallen rubbish has been carried out to sea by storms and tempests during the long ages of the past.

Ibrahim Pasha, after the conquest of this country by the Egyptians, enforced a sweeping conscription amongst the Moslems, in order to recruit his army then marching northward against the Sultân. The people regarded such a conscription with abhorrence, and to escape from it young and old sought the protection of the European consuls, merchants, and foreign residents. Our houses were crowded with refugees. Many fled to the mountains; others hid in old wells, empty cisterns, and caves. A few, pursued by the Egyptian soldiers, fled to this place; and while some vainly endeavored to conceal themselves in the caverns below, others threw themselves into the sea, and, swimming to the Rousha, climbed to the top of those rocky pinnacles. There they were besieged, however, and fired upon by the soldiers, and finally hunger and thirst compelled them to surrender.

These perpendicular cliffs rise to a height of about two hundred feet above the sea, and the Rousha towers still higher. During the winter storms it is sometimes dangerous to stand here. Creeping up to the edge and looking down, the scene is weird and wild beyond description. Far as the eye can follow tumultuous "white caps" advance rank on rank. The fierceness of the gale, the dashing of the great waves high up the cliffs, and the deafening roar, are but features in the great struggle below; and the Rousha, swept by the waves, and half-concealed by the flying spray, presents an appearance as grand as it is sublime.

In the chalky rocks some distance to the south of this are numerous petrified echini, in admirable preservation, like those in the cliffs below Burj el Musheirifeh, at the south-western extremity of the Ladder of Tyre. I have collected many specimens of them.

We will now ride over the sandy desert, south-eastward to the quarries, from which the building-stone of Beirût is taken.

This sand-sea is the same which spreads southward for several miles, I suppose, that we crossed in coming from Sidon?

Its origin was probably in this vicinity, and its billows, some twenty, some forty, and some even sixty feet high, have rolled inwards and spread themselves far and wide for miles over the plain. Were it not for the modern residences and broad streets on Râs Beirût, this sea of sand would sweep over the cape northward and

reach the sea at Mînat el Hŭsn. It has already overwhelmed most of the mulberry gardens, and half-buried many of the low houses on the outskirts of the city in that direction.

These long lines of stolid, woe-begone donkeys, toiling through this deep sand with such heavy loads of rough stone upon their backs, are evidently coming from the quarries.

All the houses of Beirût have thus been upon the backs of donkeys. The quarriers not only dig down these high ridges on our right, but penetrate through the superincumbent soil to a considerable depth, until the formation gives out, or becomes so friable as to be useless. This entire south-western part of the plain has been thus ransacked, and the mulberry-trees which you now see growing above quarries were planted there after they had been worked out, and the soil replaced over them.

We will now have a pleasant ramble eastward, through narrow lanes with low walls, surmounted by impenetrable prickly-pear hedges, an example of what all the pathways around the city were like fifty years ago. These cactus hedges grow to a very large size here, and the prickly pears are arranged upon the thorny leaves as closely as they can be packed. I have counted upwards of fifty "pears" on a single leaf. When the thorny rind of the fruit is removed the "core" is a mass of seeds and pulp, about the size of a hen's egg. In July and August great quantities of prickly pears are eaten, not only by the natives but also by foreigners, who soon become extremely fond of them. Eaten in the morning, after they have lain in cold water over night, they are delicious.

We are now passing along the pine-groves south-west of Beirût which we saw on our way from Sidon.

They are all alike, with no mixture of any other kind of tree, and quite the feature in this neighborhood.

They were sown just as wheat or corn would be. The pine seeds, brought from the forests on Lebanon, were scattered over the sandy soil, and ploughed under during the rainy season. The young plants were, of course, too close together, and were gradually thinned out, and the rest pruned as they grew up. I saw this grove thus sown in the winter of 1846, by Mahmûd Beg, the Egyptian Governor of Beirût. Farther south are extensive groves of



EL HŬRSH—THE PINES.

these trees only a few years old. Above that dense forest of larger trees to the eastward towered many splendid old pines, which were said to have been sown by Fakhr ed Dîn, the famous Druse emîr. They rose without a limb to a height of seventy or eighty feet, and then spread out their branches like an immense parasol, covered

over with green leaves. They added greatly to the picturesque appearance of that grove; but year after year one or more of them was struck by lightning and killed, or thrown down by the wind, and now but few of those venerable patriarchs remain.

I am always expecting to look upon sights and scenes that suggest topics of Biblical interest, and here is one. This large old tree is a striking specimen of the Syrian sycamore. I once heard an itinerant preacher in the "backwoods" puzzle himself and his hearers with a doubtful criticism about the tree into which Zaccheus climbed to see Jesus.[1] He and his audience were familiar only with the sycamores of our flat river bottoms, tall as a steeple, and smooth as hypocrisy. "Why," said the orator, "a squirrel can't climb them." The conclusion reached was that the sycamore must have been a mulberry-tree.

Nothing is easier than to climb these sycamores; and, in fact, boys and girls are often seen in them. The sycamore is found by the way-side, and in open spaces where several roads meet, just where Zaccheus found it; and as its giant branches stretch quite across the roadway, those on them can look directly down upon the crowd passing beneath. It is admirably adapted to the purpose for which he selected it. It is a remarkable tree. It not only bears more than one crop of figs during the year, but the fruit grows on short stems along the trunk and large branches, and not at the end of twigs, as in other fruit-bearing trees. The figs are small, and of a yellow color. At Gaza and Askelon they are of a purple tinge, and much larger than in this part of the country. They are carried to market in great quantities, and appear to be more valued there than here. Still, they are, at best, very insipid, and only the poorer classes gather sycamore figs and eat them. This agrees with and explains the allusion of Amos. He had aroused the wrath of Jeroboam by the severity of his rebukes, and, being advised to flee for his life, excuses himself by a statement which implies that he belonged to the humblest class of the community: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit."[2]

The sycamore is easily propagated merely by planting a stout

[1] Luke xix. 1–6.

[2] Amos vii. 14. See illustration on page 115.

EL JIMÂIS—THE SYCAMORE.

branch in the ground, and watering it until it has struck out roots, which it does with great rapidity, and in every direction. It was probably with reference to this latter fact that our blessed Lord selected it to illustrate the power of faith. "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."[1] Now, look at this tree—its ample girth, its widespread limbs, branching off from the trunk only a few feet above the ground; then examine its roots, almost as thick, as numerous, and as wide-spread into the deep soil as the branches extend into the air—a very type of invincible steadfastness. What power can pluck up such a tree? Heaven's



SYCAMORE FIGS.

[1] Luke xvii. 6.

thunder-bolt may strike it down, the wild tornado may tear it to fragments, but nothing short of miraculous power can fairly pluck up these Syrian sycamores by the roots.

I have but faint ideas of a faith that could pluck up and plant in the sea such a tree as that; and these facts certainly add great



SELLER OF SYCAMORE FRUIT.

emphasis to the "parable of our Lord." You are doubtless aware, however, that most critics maintain that the sycamine-tree mentioned in the New Testament was the black mulberry.

I have ventured to adopt the rendering of the Arabic Bible,

where the sycamine is translated sycamore, believing that there is no certain evidence that the mulberry was known in this country in Biblical times, although our translators have mentioned it in one or more places. The mulberry, whether black or white, is more easily plucked up by the roots than other trees of the same size in the country, and that is oftener done. Hundreds of them are uprooted every year in this vicinity and brought to the city, where the trunks are sold to carpenters, and the roots and branches are used for firewood. Many are also undermined by the winter torrents and swept away into the sea. It is not probable that He who spoke as "never man spake" would select a mulberry-tree, even if it existed at that time, with its short, feeble roots, to illustrate the irresistible power of faith.

In regard to the sycamore, it may be well to notice that in the dry, hot climate of Egypt the wood was very durable, and was extensively used for boxes, idols, and mummy cases. In this country neither the wood nor the fruit are of much value, and the tree cannot bear the cold. A sharp frost will kill it; and this agrees with the fact that they were so killed in Egypt. Amongst the wonders wrought by the Lord "in the field of Zoan," David says, "He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost."[1] A frost keen enough to kill the sycamores would be a great "wonder" at the present day in that same field of Zoan.

The sycamore flourishes best in sandy plains and warm vales. In the time of David they appear to have been planted in groves, like the olive, for we read that he appointed an overseer "over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that were in the low plains."[2] They must have been esteemed of little value in the days of Solomon, for, when even silver was nothing accounted of in Jerusalem, he made "cedars to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance."[3] In the time of the prophet Isaiah the cedar takes the place of the sycamore, and "Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria say, in pride and stoutness of heart, the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars."[4]

Our road has brought us into 'Assûr, as this sandy open space just south of the old wall of the city is called. It was formerly

[1] Psa. lxxviii. 43, 47. [2] 1 Chron. xxvii. 28. [3] 1 Kings x. 27. [4] Isa. ix. 9, 10.

much larger than now, and shaded by a number of wide-spreading sycamore-trees, but they have nearly all disappeared.

The Protestant Cemetery, where rest in peace many who were greatly beloved in their day and generation, even by the natives of every class and creed, and whose memory is revered by all, is directly above the west end of 'Assûr. The printing establishment of the American Mission overlooks the cemetery, and adjoining it is the Bible House. The Anglo-American church edifice is farther up, on the same premises, and back of that is the large and flourishing Female Seminary of the Mission.



ANGLO-AMERICAN CHURCH.

I am reminded by the locality of a most extraordinary scene which I saw enacted in this 'Assûr. Early on the morning of May 9th, 1847, the people of Beirût were seen hurrying along the road towards Sidon, evidently to participate in some great pageant. I soon ascertained that two venerated pilgrims were returning from Mecca, and that the dervishes and their sheikhs, who make some bold attempts at supernatural manifestations, and sometimes with

singular success, were to perform extraordinary feats on that occasion. The whole city, male and female, rushed along the road to meet the pilgrims, with banners, tambourines, cymbals, and other musical instruments, singing, dancing, and clapping their hands. In about an hour they returned. The crowd was now very large, and the countenances of many exhibited signs of the most intense excitement and eager expectation.

In front of the procession which now appeared came four flags, green, yellow, white, and black, the staffs being surmounted with a double crescent of metal. Behind these were a number of dervishes from a distance, dancing with all their might, and performing their most fantastic and fanatical feats of legerdemain. They were naked to the waist, wore tall, conical caps of felt, and were the vilest and most savage-looking creatures I ever saw. Some of them carried short iron pikes, the heads of which were balls as large as oranges, with many spikes and chains attached to them. The sharp end of these instruments they struck with great violence into their cheeks and about their eyes, and so deeply that they hung suspended without being held by the hand. I do not know how this is performed, though I have seen it done since, and have examined the instrument. Others had long, spindle-like spikes thrust through from cheek to cheek. I saw that done also by a dervish in my house; but he had long before made holes in his cheeks, which had healed up, like those through the ears for rings. These his bushy beard completely concealed.

The frantic behavior of the officiating fanatics in that ceremony reminded me of the conduct of the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel, who leaped upon the altar and "cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them."[1] I have seen the blood streaming from wounds self-inflicted by Moslem dervishes and fanatical sheikhs.

After those dervishes came four more flags; then two very holy sheikhs, riding on small horses. They pretended to be altogether absorbed and wrapped up in devotion, prayed incessantly, with their eyes closed, and took no notice of the large and tumultuous crowd around them. The frantic people prostrated themselves on the

[1] 1 Kings xviii. 26, 28.

ground before them, kissed their broad stirrups or the flags, but most of all the two pilgrims from Mecca, who now made their ap-pearance, and seemed to be tired out, and in danger of being kissed to death by relatives, friends, and acquaintances.

Just at the entrance into 'Assûr a long pavement of men and boys was formed in the following manner: the first lay on his face, with his head to the south; the next with feet to the south, and so on, heads and feet, to the end of this living corduroy causeway, the



ED DOUSEH—THE TREADING.

people crowding them along the line as close to one another as possible. A dense mass of spectators on either side formed a lane, along which the two sheikhs actually rode, from end to end, on top of the men and boys. I stood on a terrace directly above them, and witnessed the whole performance, and saw the men and boys jump up again apparently unhurt. My Moslem servant was one of them, and he assured me that the sheikhs' horses were not heavier

than cats. The thing is not difficult to explain. The men and boys were close together, the ground soft and sandy, the horses small, their shoes flat and smooth, and they walked as if treading on eggs; and yet many of the lads were really bruised, and some seriously injured. The whole scene, however, was demoniacal in the extreme. It is called ed Douseh, the treading, and is accompanied with many superstitious ceremonies.

We have completed the circuit of that part of Beirût and its suburbs lying west of the Damascus road, and have now returned to the gate of our house from whence we started this morning.

IV.

BEIRÛT TO SHEMLÂN.

A Mountain House.—Moving to the Mountains.—Modern Summer Residences.—Lebanon a Favorite Summer Retreat.—Dames de Nazareth.—The Sisters of Charity.—Silk Factory.—Cocoons.—Export of Silk.—The Pines.—The Damascus Road.—No Trace of an Ancient Highway over Lebanon.—'Âreiya.—El Mŭghîteh.—Jebel el Kenîseh.—El Bukâ'a.—Shtôra.—Mejdel 'Anjar.—Anti-Lebanon.—Diligences.—Baggage-wagons.—The Carriage-drive.—Canals.—Rustem Pasha's Bridge.—Khân el Hasmîyeh.—The Plain.—The Palm-tree.—Phœnicia.—Hebrew Women Named after the Palm-tree.—Biblical Allusions to the Palm-tree.—Palm-branches an Emblem of Rejoicing.—Bethany, the House of Dates.—Clusters of Dates.—El Hadeth.—Shehâb Emîrs.—As'ad esh Shediak.—History of Lebanon.—B'abda.—Geodes of Quartz.—Blind Beggar by the Way-side.—The Carob-tree.—St. John's Bread.—"The Husks."—Syrup.—Dukkân el Wŭrwar.—Nahr el Ghŭdîr.—Wady Shahrûr.—Kefr Shîma.—Terraced Hill-sides.—Sarcophagi.—Protestant Chapel.—Soap.—Ascent of the Mountain.—Deir el Kurkufeh.—Anemones and Cyclamens.—Pine-grove.—Sandstone Formation.—Road to Aitâth.—'Ain Bsâba.—Mountain Scenery.—'Ain 'Anoûb.—Village Fountain.—Road to Shemlân.—Summer Eve on Lebanon.—Shemlân.—Lebanon a Range of Mountains.—Dean Stanley.—"The White Mountain."—Rains and Snows on Lebanon.—Geological Characteristics of Lebanon.—Conspicuous Summits of Lebanon.—The Rivers of Lebanon.—The Natural Bridge.—Temple of Venus.—Birthplace of Adonis.—Cedar-groves.—Convent of Kanôbîn.—Orthosia.—The Seaward Face of Lebanon.—The Orontes.—The Eastern Side of Lebanon.—El Berdûny.—Fountains at Meshghŭrah.—Villages on Lebanon.—Biblical Allusions to Lebanon.—Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah.—Goodly Lebanon.—The Province of Tripoli and that of Sidon.—Districts of Lebanon.—Emîr Beshîr Shebâh.—Ibrahîm Pasha.—The Allied Powers.—Civil Wars and Massacres.—The Present Form of Government.—Population of Lebanon.—The Muhammedans and Metâwileh.—The Greeks and Greek Catholics.—The Maronites and Druses.

July 2d.

We move to our summer residence on the mountains to-day, and the confusion brings to mind the way such removals were accomplished half a century ago, and, indeed, until quite recently. In 1836 I rented a house in Brummâna for the small sum of one dollar and a half a month. It had three rooms, such as they were, with

but one door, and a small window without glass, in each room. The low roofs were black with smoke, festooned with dusty cobwebs, and infested with a lively colony of fleas. The rooms were used for raising silk-worms, and possession of them could not be obtained until the cocoons had been removed, which was done about the 1st of July. The earthen floors were then covered with a thin coating of clay, and rubbed smooth with a large pebble. The walls were roughly "whitewashed" with clay, but without lime, and then the premises were pronounced ready for occupation. It is needless to add that all the work was done by the women of the family, who appear to be natural adepts in such occupations.

Every article needed for keeping house, bedding and bedsteads, tables and chairs, miscellaneous furniture, kitchen utensils, stores of provisions, and the many et cæteras which our mode of life on the mountains renders necessary, had to be transported on donkeys, mules, or camels, and sad havoc of such articles was always made in the transfer. Broken dishes, dislocated chairs, and crippled tables rendered "moving to the mountains" not only an aggravation, but also a source of considerable expense. Of course the tables and chairs soon made large holes in the soft earthen floors, notwithstanding the protection of mats and carpets, and they had to be frequently repaired, not merely to mend the broken places, but also to expel the fleas that increased in almost countless numbers and found a congenial element in the fine clay dust.

All these things have now passed away. As the number of families seeking summer quarters increased the villagers began to improve their houses, in order to obtain higher rents. New houses were also built. Earthen floors gave place to concrete cement or polished marble, and glass windows became common. Quite recently commodious residences have been constructed in the larger villages, such as Bhamdûn, 'Aleih, Sûk el Ghŭrb, 'Âitâth, Shemlân, 'Âbeih, and some others. Not a few foreign residents of Beirût now possess commodious dwellings, and gather about them all that is required to render their summer residences both comfortable and attractive. Good roads have also been made by the Governor-general of the Lebanon, and families can now reach their mountain homes in private carriages or in those hired in the city.

These improvements have, of course, largely increased the cost of living, during the summer months, on Lebanon; but the benefit to health and personal enjoyment abundantly compensate those who are able to afford the expense. This is emphatically true of families with small children. In many instances moving to the mountains is the only means left to save the lives of the little ones when they have been attacked by those fatal summer complaints which sometimes defy all medical skill. It is surprising to see how speedily the cool, invigorating air of the mountains will revive not only the little sufferers, but also the emaciated victims of the malignant Syrian fevers. Lebanon is destined to become erelong a favorite summer retreat for invalids and for those who occupy the sultry valley of the Nile, the sea-board, and the hot plains around the eastern end of the Mediterranean.

But it is time to start. Salîm has taken the tents and our personal baggage, with all the necessary supplies for the table and the kitchen, in one of the wagons belonging to the Damascus Road Company; and when we arrive at our summer home in Shemlân we shall find everything comfortably arranged for our reception and convenience. We, however, will keep to the saddle, not only because I prefer this mode of travelling to any other in the land, but also because in that way we shall see more of the country and its productions than if shut up in a carriage.

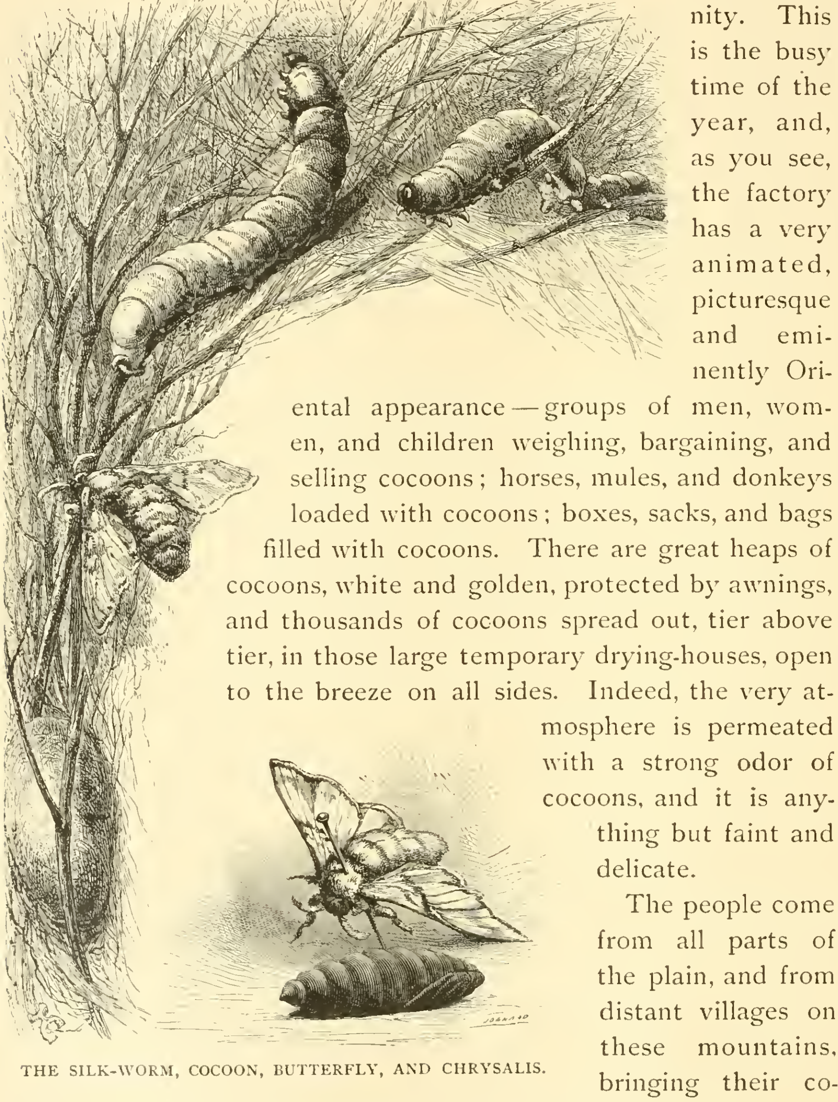
What is the distance to Shemlân?

About ten miles, and, at our usual rate of travel, it will take us three hours. The elevation of the village above the sea is a little more than two thousand feet, which gives an average temperature considerably below that of the plain and the city.

This road is leading us through a part of the suburbs of Beirût which we have not seen before. That large establishment on the hill east of us occupies a very conspicuous position.

It is the French educational institution for girls, and belongs to the Dames de Nazareth. It is not as large, nor does it accommodate as many pupils, as the extensive buildings of the Sisters of Charity, which we noticed just before passing Canon Square; but the well-kept grounds and the beautiful garden testify to their skill and good taste in horticultural pursuits.

That bustling and crowded establishment on the roadside is one of the many silk-reeling factories which have sprung up recently in this vicinity. This is the busy time of the year, and, as you see, the factory has a very animated, picturesque and eminently Oriental appearance — groups of men, women, and children weighing, bargaining, and selling cocoons; horses, mules, and donkeys loaded with cocoons; boxes, sacks, and bags filled with cocoons. There are great heaps of cocoons, white and golden, protected by awnings, and thousands of cocoons spread out, tier above tier, in those large temporary drying-houses, open to the breeze on all sides. Indeed, the very atmosphere is permeated with a strong odor of cocoons, and it is anything but faint and delicate.



THE SILK-WORM, COCOON, BUTTERFLY, AND CHRYSALIS.

The people come from all parts of the plain, and from distant villages on these mountains, bringing their cocoons to the factories. Many cocoons are merely "stifled" in a furnace or "steamed" in large quantities, to kill the grub, and are then shipped to Europe. Most of them are taken to Lyons to be

reeled, and the silk manufactured there is then exported to London and New York. In fact, it is sent over the world, and even returns to its native land to deck out in gay colors these very people who are so anxious now to rid themselves of it for the French gold with which they must ultimately buy it again. Silk-culture is the great and absorbing industry of this part of Syria, and in a favorable season the crop is very remunerative.

Here, on our right, is el Hŭrsh, or the pines — a part of the same grove which we saw the other day; but the trees are many years older and much larger than those on the western side of the forest. There is a young grove a short distance farther on which I remember to have seen sown some twenty years ago.

This French road to Damascus, which we are now following, is certainly well made, and kept in excellent repair.

It is all that, and as good as any in France itself. Not only was it the first carriage-road of importance in this country, but also it is the only one ever constructed over Lebanon. There is nowhere the slightest indication of an ancient highway of this kind to be seen on the mountains. After passing by the eastern border of "the pines," it stretches in a straight line across the plain, rising gradually till it reaches the foot-hills of Lebanon at Khân el Hasmîyeh, from thence it winds up the steep declivities of the mountain to the pretty little village of 'Âreiya. It then passes above the southern cliffs of the Beirût River to the last wild ascent over the pass of el Mŭgheîteh, about five thousand feet above the sea, having below it, on the north, the magnificent scenery around the head-waters of that picturesque river, dominated by the exalted majesty of Jebel el Kenîseh. From the top of the Mŭgheîteh the road descends steeply to the Bŭkâ'a, and then stretches across the plain from Shtôra to Mejdel 'Anjar. Thenceforward the grading is less difficult, and the ascent over Anti-Lebanon is comparatively easy. The distance from Beirût to Damascus is about seventy miles, and is accomplished in twelve or thirteen hours. Diligences run daily between the two cities, and long lines of baggage-wagons are constantly seen passing to and fro along this broad highway.

This long and sloping stretch of road across the plain and up to the foot-hills of Lebanon appears to be the fashionable carriage-

drive from the city, and I am surprised to see so many of those vehicles evidently owned by natives.

Carriages made their first appearance in Beirût with the completion of this road to Damascus, and already they are as common as in many European cities of the same size. There are quite a number of coffee-shops along this drive and on the bank of the Beirût River, to our left; and every evening they are frequented by the élite of the city, who spend a passing hour discussing the news and gossip of the day, smoking cigarettes and nargîlehs, sipping black coffee, and drinking 'arak and sherbet.

These canals convey the water from the river at different elevations, and by them the whole plain west of us is irrigated. Rustem Pasha, Governor-general of the Lebanon, has recently constructed a fine bridge over the river in this vicinity by which to reach his large and attractive garden. He has also made a drive on the opposite bank down to the bridge on the road to the Dog River. That new bridge is a great convenience to the people of this neighborhood during the floods of winter.

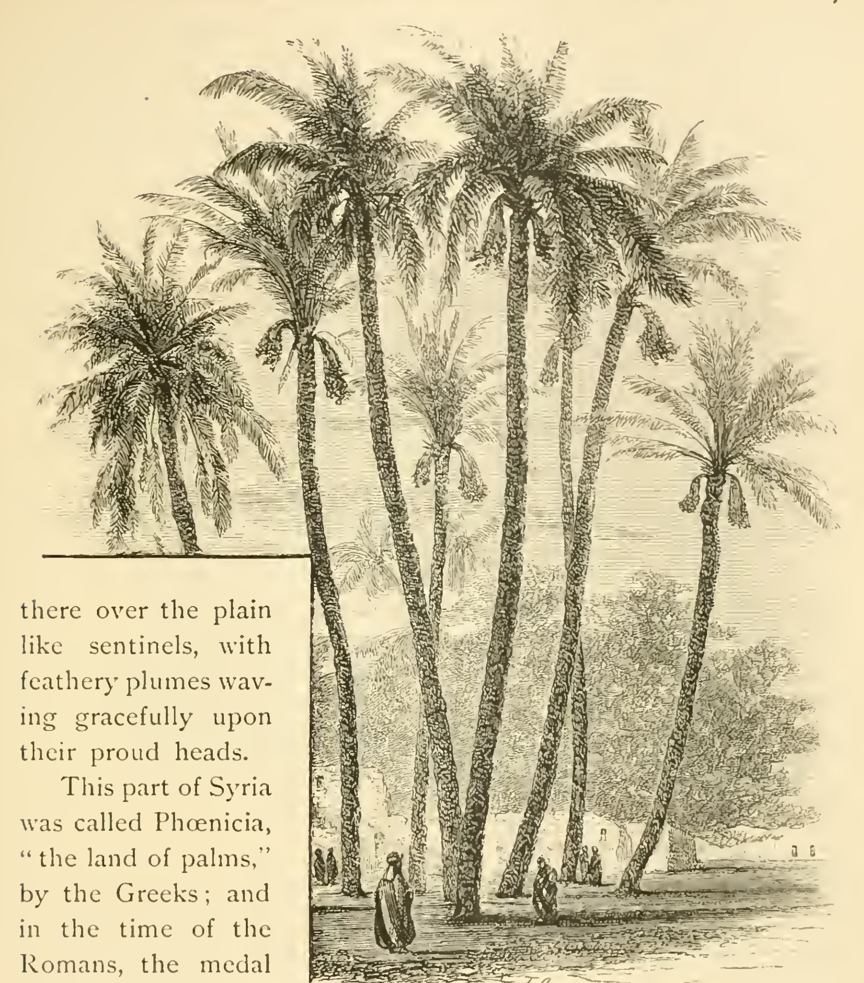
This place to which we are now coming is Khân el Hasmîyeh, and here most of the carriages stop and then return to the city. Here, also, the road to Damascus begins to wind up the mountain-side, and other roads turn off in different directions.

We will now keep along the base of the mountains to the south, having in full view, below us on the right, the entire plain, or es Sâhil, and the olive-groves westward to the Mediterranean.

What a sea of variegated verdure stretches away to the south-west far as the eye can follow!

This is one of the richest plains in the country—a perfect wilderness of mulberry and fruit trees; and beyond spread the vast olive-groves of Shuweifât. There is nothing on the Syrian coast equal to it. It lies between the mountains and the far-off sea, protected by the city and the pine-forests, and hedged in by the distant sand-hills. Its climate and fruits are almost tropical, and one never wearies gazing upon its varied beauties, or riding along its shady lanes and through its green alleys.

Those palm-trees—the loftiest and most stately we have seen—add much to the beauty of the prospect. They stand here and



EN NŬKHL—THE PALM.

there over the plain like sentinels, with feathery plumes waving gracefully upon their proud heads.

This part of Syria was called Phœnicia, "the land of palms," by the Greeks; and in the time of the Romans, the medal of Vespasian, commemorating the capture of Jerusalem, represents Judea as a woman mourning under a palm-tree. As the tree is tall, slender, and graceful, the daughters of the Hebrews were sometimes named after it. The wife of Er, the firstborn son of Judah; the daughter of David, and the only daughter of Absalom—both remarkable for their beauty—were all called Tamar; and the name is still not uncommon in the country. Erect as rectitude itself, the palm-tree suggests to the Arab poets many a symbol for their lady-love; and Solomon, long before

them, has sung, "How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! This thy stature is like to a palm-tree."[1]

Yes; and Solomon's father says, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age. They shall be fat and flourishing."[2]

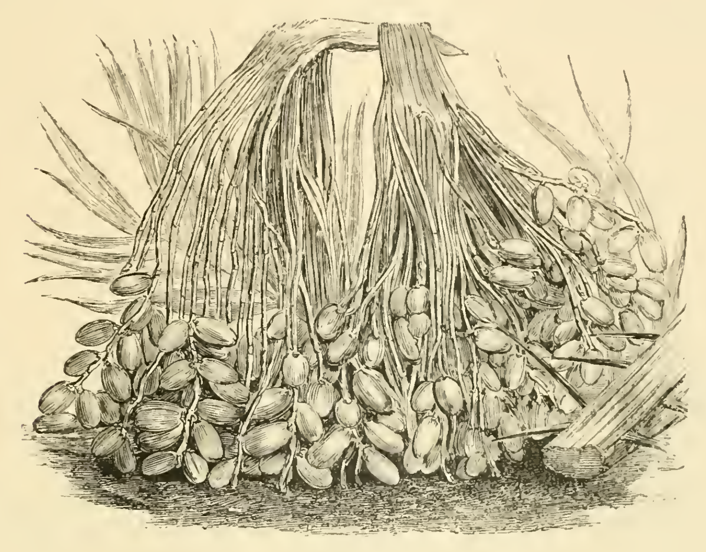
The royal poet derived that illustration with which he adorns his sacred ode from the habits of this tree. The palm grows slowly, but steadily, from generation to generation, uninfluenced by those alternations of the seasons which affect other trees. It does not rejoice overmuch in winter's copious rain, nor does it droop under the drought and the burning sun of summer. Neither heavy weights which men place upon its head, nor the importunate urgency of the wind, can sway it aside from uprightness. There it stands, looking calmly down upon the world below, and patiently yielding its large clusters of golden fruit from season to season. They still bring forth fruit in old age.

The allusion to those planted in the house of the Lord was probably due to the custom of planting beautiful and long-lived trees in the courts of temples and palaces, and in all "high places" used for worship. This is still common; nearly every palace, and mosk, and convent in the country has such trees in the courts, and, being well protected there, they flourish exceedingly. Solomon covered all the walls of the Temple "round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm-trees and open flowers, within and without."[3] Their presence there was not only ornamental, but appropriate and highly suggestive. The Jews used palm-branches as emblems of rejoicing during the feast of ingathering and of tabernacles.[4] Christians do the same on Palm Sunday, in commemoration of our Saviour's triumphal entry into Jerusalem from Bethany; for we read, in John xii. 12, 13, that "much people," on that occasion, "took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet" Jesus. Dean Stanley supposes that Bethany, "the house of dates," derived its name from the palm-trees that grew on Olivet.[5] Palm branches are often woven into an arch and placed over the head of the

[1] Song vii. 6, 7. [2] Psa. xcii. 12–14. [3] 1 Kings vi. 29.
[4] Lev. xxiii. 40; Neh. viii. 15. [5] Sinai and Palestine, p. 143.

bier which carries man to his long home, emblematic not only of patience in well-doing, but of the rewards of the righteous—a flourishing old age and a glorious immortality.

In this country the fruit of the palm-tree is neither so abundant nor so sweet and luscious as in Arabia, Egypt, and some other regions. But I have seen very large clusters of dates on many of



THAMR—DATES.

the tallest of these trees; and the owners protect the fruit from hornets and birds by fastening round the clusters parts of old garments and rice baskets made from the palm-leaf itself.

That village stretching along the foot of the hills for a mile or more is called el Hadeth. It was the residence of a branch of the family of Shehâb emîrs. When I first came to this country I was acquainted with one of the emîrs whose eyes had been put out by order of his relative, the Emîr Beshîr of Bteddîn. El Hadeth was also the home of As'ad esh Shediak, the learned and able writer, and the first Protestant martyr. His brother Yûsuf was also one of the few native scholars of those days, and his history of Lebanon and its feudal families contains much valuable information.

Directly above and east of el Hadeth is B'abda, a large and

flourishing village. An old palace, picturesquely situated on a hill west of the village, about eight hundred feet above the sea, is now occupied as a winter residence by the Government of the Lebanon, to escape the severe cold of Bteddîn. The cretaceous hills east of B'abda abound in geodes of quartz, whose interior is thickly studded with perfect and brilliant crystals. Some of them are very large, and when first broken open the pointed crystals sparkle like diamonds, and are so intensely hard as to cut glass.



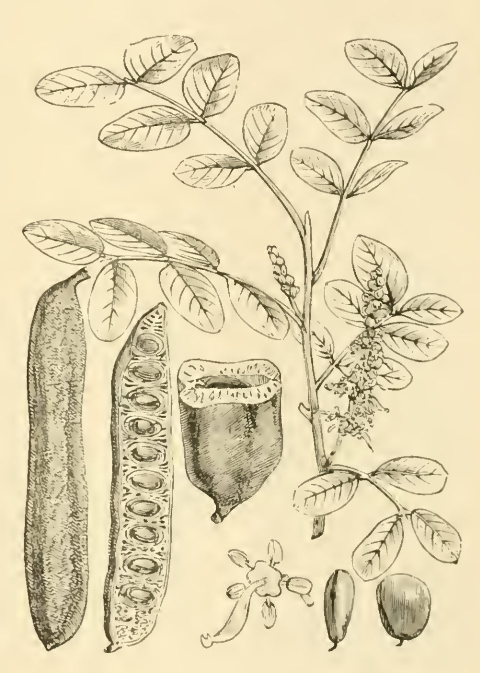
EL KHARNÛB—THE CAROB.

There is a blind beggar "sitting by the highway side begging."[1] The tree under which he sits is called the Blindman's Tree, and on the ridge above us are many such kharnûb-trees, loaded with

[1] Mark x. 46.

long flat husks or pods. It is an evergreen, and casts a most delightful and refreshing shade over the weary traveller. In this country the kharnûb-trees do not yield very large crops, but in Cyprus, Asia Minor, and the Grecian Islands full-grown trees bend under half a ton of green pods.

The kharnûb is sometimes called St. John's Bread, and also Locust-tree, from a mistaken tradition concerning the food of the Baptist in the wilderness. Its botanical name is Ceratonia Siliqua, and there is no reason to doubt that it was the tree which bore "the husks that the swine did eat," and with which the poor prodigal "would fain have filled his belly."[1] The "husks"—a misnomer—are fleshy pods somewhat like those of the locust-tree, from six to ten inches long, containing several seeds, and lined with a gelatinous substance, sweet and pleasant to the taste when thoroughly ripe. I have seen large gardens of kharnûb-trees in Cyprus, where it is still the food that the swine do eat. In Syria, where there are no swine, or next to none, the pods are ground up and a syrup expressed, which is much used in making certain kinds of sweetmeats and refreshing beverages.



CAROB PODS—THE HUSKS.

Dukkân el Wŭrwâr, which we are now approaching, is one of those "shops" along the way-side, where coffee and refreshments, food and fodder, can be obtained. It is pleasantly situated above the valley of Nahr el Ghŭdîr, a small stream which comes down from Wady Shahrûr, and finds its way to the sea through the olive-

[1] Luke xv. 16.

groves below Shuweifât. That large village on the foot-hills to the south-west, and directly across the valley, is Kefr Shîma. To the east of it the mountain declivities rise with great regularity; and, owing to the character of the soil and the abundant supply of water, the entire hill-sides are terraced tier above tier, presenting to the view, in every direction, a varied expanse of olive-groves, fig-orchards, mulberry-gardens, and vineyards, seldom seen to better advantage, even on this "goodly Lebanon."

Before turning down the hill-side and crossing the Ghŭdîr, I wish to point out a place here on our right, where many years ago I saw uncovered a number of ancient tombs, excavated in the soft cretaceous rock. In each tomb there was a sarcophagus made, like common pottery, of baked clay. Those sarcophagi were of all sizes, from two to six feet in length. There were no inscriptions on any of them; and as they appeared to be of no value to the owners of the field they were destroyed, and the mulberry-trees that now cover the hill-side were planted in their place.

Here on our right is a small Protestant chapel, one of many which are now seen all over this part of Lebanon. The inhabitants of Kefr Shîma, Shuweifât, and other neighboring villages are chiefly engaged in agricultural pursuits and the manufacture of soap from the oil produced by the extensive olive-groves in this region.

From here the ascent commences, and we must address ourselves in earnest to this steep and steady climb up the mountain for about an hour. The path winds round and up the eastern side of that bold rocky promontory, the summit of which is covered with a small pine-grove, and crowning the very top is the picturesque Convent or Deir of Mâr Antânus el Kurkufeh. In early spring the rude stone walls that sustain these terraces are almost concealed under the green leaves and beautiful flowers of scarlet anemones and pink and white cyclamens.

We have risen above the hard limestone rock, over which our horses have been stumbling; and here, at this dukkân, we may rest for a few moments, and refresh ourselves with the cool breeze that is wafted up the valley from the distant sea.

This pine-grove, through which we are now riding, grows upon a soft, many-colored sandstone, curiously worn and cut up by the

winter rains. It is a fair specimen of the pine-forests all over Lebanon; and it is interesting to notice that wherever on these mountains there is a pine-grove, there, also, the formation is sandstone.

The road up the mountain to 'Âitâth, and thence to Shemlân, has always been considered the shortest, but it is rough and uninteresting. We will take this path that turns off here to the right, and go by the way of 'Ain 'Anoûb. That road winds round valleys and hills, and up the mountain-side, and the view is eminently characteristic of Lebanon and its scenery.

Let us water our thirsty horses at this fountain. I have taken many a lunch and quiet rest beneath that magnificent oak-tree above the birkeh, or reservoir, into which the water is gathered that irrigates those vegetable gardens below the road. 'Ain Bsâba is one of those delicious fountains of cold water for which Lebanon is so justly celebrated; and like some of them it has its dark legends of highway robbery and even murder.

The boundless expanse of that beautiful sea ever widens as we rise higher and higher, until it seems as if the sea and the sky met in one unbroken line, from the far north to the distant south.

There are hundreds of such limitless prospects on Lebanon, and others far more imposing and sublime. The character of the scenery varies with the scene; sometimes it is historic, at other times romantic, but always impressive even to fascination.

Opposite to us, across this profound valley, is 'Ain 'Anoûb, seen in profile against the sky. Its houses, clinging one above the other to the mountain-side, are half concealed by the dense foliage of the oak, the olive, and the green leaves of the mulberry and the vine; while of fruit trees the apple, the apricot, the peach, and even the orange and lemon, are found growing in sheltered nooks.

Although this is the first village fountain I have seen on Lebanon, my horse seems to be well acquainted with its main purpose, so far, at least, as he is concerned.

Hereafter it may be well for you to consider your associates at such fountains, or, in the impetuous rush for the water-trough, you and your horse will get too warm a welcome from some friendly mule, which both of you will soon regret and long remember.

Passing through 'Ain 'Anoûb, we will take the path that climbs



EL 'AIN—THE FOUNTAIN.

the ridge above the village, instead of following the longer road, through the olive-groves, and which zigzags up the rocky cliffs below Shemlân. The distance is not over twenty minutes.

This may be the shortest road; but it is very steep, and these broken and rocky steps are not only extremely worn and slippery, but actually dangerous to life and limb.

It has always been so, and the numberless attempts to mend it have only aggravated the evil. But the worst is past, and we are coming near the lower part of the village, and will soon reach our house on the hill-side above the fountain.

The varied sounds and scenes of a summer eve on Lebanon are strangely impressive. Birds are singing in the highest branches of the bushes and the trees, and shepherds call to their flocks on the rocky hill-sides, and hurry them towards the fold. Boys and girls are driving the cattle homeward from the field; and men and women are on the house-tops, protecting the wheat that was exposed to the sunlight during the day from the dew by night. And over the hills and across the valleys the deep, rich tones of the convent bells at Deir el Kurkufeh are wafted, vibrating through the air.

> The glorious sun is setting in the far west,
> And its golden rays are gleaming across the silver sea;
> And as the mountain shadows lengthen, and the sunlight dies away,
> The purple haze in the valley deepens, and night succeeds the day.

July 29th.

I am delighted with the commanding situation of this village and the simplicity of our mountain life; it has all the freedom and independence of tent-life, without many of its uncertainties.

Certainly it is a happy escape from the blazing sun and blinding glare of the city and the plain. I love the mountains, all of them, and most of all these noble mountains of "goodly Lebanon," with which I have been familiar for more than half a lifetime. Over their rugged ranges I have rambled and scrambled by day and by night, until I can recall at will each peak and crag, their shapes and features, and give to each its special name.

I anticipate both pleasure and profit from our sojourn on this mountain, which Moses so longed to see, but could not; and I am impatient to begin our rambles over "sainted Lebanon;" but first of all I should like to obtain a comprehensive description of it.

You are aware that Mount Lebanon is a misnomer, and conveys an erroneous impression. It is not a single mount at all, but a lofty range, or chain, of mountains. Commencing in the rolling hills of

Belâd Beshârah, and rising higher and higher, the ridge extends for about one hundred miles, from Jebel er Rihân, south-east of Sidon, to a profound cliff east of Sîr, in the district of ed Dŭnnîyeh, a day's ride north of the Cedars. Beyond that are the lower but rugged ridges and wild ravines of Jebel 'Akkâr. The average breadth of Lebanon, from the Mediterranean to the plain of el Bŭkâ'a, Cœlesyria, is not more than twenty-five miles.

According to Dean Stanley, White, or Snow Mountain, "is the natural and almost uniform name of the highest mountains in all countries."[1] The ancient Hebrew name, Lebanon, and the modern Arabic one, Jebel Libnân — White Mountain — was, probably, suggested by the magnificent appearance of this mountain-range when covered with the snows of winter, rather than by the whitish aspect of its limestone formation, as some have supposed.

Lebanon is so situated relatively to "this great and wide sea" as to attract to itself the moist winds from the Mediterranean in winter, and the balmy breezes from the sunny South in early spring. During half the year copious rains water its terraced sides, and its lofty summits and profound ravines are then buried under deep snow, which remains there to cool the air of summer, and sustain the countless fountains that give life and beauty to the valleys and fields below.

The geological, as well as the physical, characteristics of this mountain contribute essentially to its beauty and fertility. Were the rocks stern granite, barren sandstone, or lifeless gypsum, no amount of rain and soft breezes would make them fertile. But the great mass of Lebanon is cretaceous limestone, soft and highly fossiliferous, with just enough of friable sandstone and volcanic rock here and there to mingle with and modify the soil.

The range of Lebanon has a number of conspicuous summits, the most remarkable of which are Taumât Nîha, above Jezzîn, five thousand six hundred feet high; Jebel el Kenîseh, east of Beirût, six thousand six hundred feet high; Sŭnnîn, farther north, eight thousand five hundred feet high; Fum el Mîzâb, nine thousand nine hundred feet high; and Dahar el Kŭdhîb, above Tripoli and north of the Cedars, over ten thousand feet high.

[1] Sinai and Palestine, Note 5, pp. 399, 400.

The rivers of Lebanon, beginning at the south, are ez Zaherâny, which rises at the south-western end of Jebel er Rihân, and reaches the sea between Sarepta and Sidon; The Auwaly, the ancient Bostrenus, has two main branches; the southern proceeds from the fountain of Jezzîn, and the stream plunges over a precipice below the town nearly two hundred and fifty feet in perpendicular height. The northern branch comes from the fountains, above the village, of el Bârûk, north-east of el Mukhtârah. The Auwaly enters the sea two miles north of Sidon. The Dâmûr, the Tamyras or Damuras of the ancients, also has two branches; but its main permanent source is below 'Ain Zahalteh. It empties into the sea midway between Sidon and Beirût. The river of Beirût, the ancient Magoras, drains the western slopes of Jebel el Kenîseh and the southern end of Sŭnnîn, and enters St. George's Bay.

North of Beirût is the Dog River, the Lycus, famous for the ancient tablets in the cliffs over the pass near its mouth, and for the marvellous caverns out of which it flows. Above the caves it has two large fountains, which burst out directly under the snows of Sŭnnîn. The Natural Bridge spans the deep chasm of Neb'a el Leben, the most southern of those fountains. Nahr Ibrahîm, the Adonis, flows out of the cavern at 'Afka, near which are the ruins of the temple dedicated to Venus. That river enters the sea a few miles south of Jebeil, the Biblical Gebal, or Byblus, of the Greeks, said to be the birthplace of Adonis.

Several smaller streams reach the sea north of Jebeil, but they need not be described. Nahr el Jauzeh descends from Tannûrîn el Fôka, between which and el Hadith there are groves of cedars. That stream reaches the sea near el Batrûn, south of the conspicuous cape anciently called Theoprosopon, the face of God, and now Râs esh Shŭkah. The next river is the Kadîsha, the holy, because it comes down from near the sacred grove of the Cedars. It is pre-eminently distinguished for the gigantic cliffs of its gorge below Bsherreh. Clinging to one of them, about four hundred feet above the river, is the historical Convent of Kanôbîn, the chief seat of the Maronite patriarch. The Kadîsha, augmented by its main tributary, the Abu 'Aly, passes through the city and the luxuriant gardens of Tripoli, and enters the bay north of it.

Nahr el Bârid descends from the highest ridges of Lebanon, above the village of Sîr, through a region of wild and magnificent scenery, and empties into the bay or Jûn of 'Akkâr, about ten miles north of Tripoli. It forms the southern boundary of the district of 'Akkâr, and on its left bank are the remains of a large city, probably the ancient Orthosia. It is these numerous rivers, with their countless tributaries and their magnificent gorges, that impart such variety, beauty, and life to the western, or seaward, face of Lebanon. "He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field," and "by them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches."[1]

At the north-eastern base of Lebanon Nahr el 'Asy, or the Orontes, flows out from the great fountain beneath the cliffs near Mughârat er Râhib, and passing northward by Ribleh, the Riblah of the Old Testament, it waters the great plain of the Biblical kingdom of Hamath. The eastern sides of the mountain are far less imposing than the western and northern slopes. The range descends abruptly to the plain of el Bŭkâ'a, and is comparatively destitute of brooks and streams of any considerable size; but along the south-eastern parts there are some noble fountains and many flourishing villages. A considerable stream, called el Berdûny, descends from Sŭnnîn, and passing through the town of Zahleh, it enriches the central portions of the Bŭkâ'a. And the large fountains at Meshghŭrah, south of Taumât Nîha, send their noisy brooks to the Lîtâny, in the valley below. These complete the list of brooks, streams, and rivers around the entire circuit of this goodly mountain; and it is to be noted that nearly all of them are on the seaward side. There, too, are situated most of the villages seen from the Mediterranean as one approaches this coast.

The earliest mention of this mountain in the Bible implies that Lebanon was then considered exceptionally beautiful. It was the one name mentioned in the earnest prayer of Moses: "I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon."[2] Moses had, no doubt, heard of its "glory," in Egypt, for we know that long before his day this

[1] Psa. civ. 10-12. [2] Deut. iii. 25.

country had been traversed by Egyptian armies, the records of whose expeditions are even now read by learned Egyptologists.

Lebanon is also mentioned by David, Solomon, Isaiah, and other sacred poets and prophets, who refer to its most striking features and characteristics. They speak of the head, the countenance, the sides, the roots of Lebanon; and of the snow, and the streams that run amongst the valleys. They sing of the glory of Lebanon, and the smell of its forests — the cedar, the fir, the pine, and the box together; and of the birds that sing amongst the branches. To the ancient seer, poet, and prophet Lebanon was a goodly mountain, which they delighted to praise; and goodly is still its most appropriate title of distinction. The Arabs say that Lebanon bears winter on his head, spring on his shoulders, and autumn in his lap, while summer lies at his feet.

Lebanon has been divided into two provinces, generally recognized as such by the Turkish Government. They are named Mu'âmalet Tarâblus and Mu'âmalet Saida, from the respective cities of Tripoli and Sidon. The dividing line, commencing at the north-eastern end of the Bay of Jûneh, is carried up a ravine called Mu'âmaltein eastward, over the mountains to the Bŭkâ'a. Of those provinces the southern, that of Sidon, is far the largest and most important. Both are subdivided into districts of very unequal size called mûkatâ'ât, or akâlîm. The northern division has eight, and the southern sixteen of those districts; and the population of the latter is fully double that of the former. In the absence of an accurate government census it is impossible to ascertain the exact number of the inhabitants, but the province of Tripoli is supposed to contain about one hundred and twenty-five thousand, and that of Sidon one hundred and fifty thousand, or, in all, nearly three hundred thousand for the entire population of Lebanon.

Very little change has been attempted in the old divisions and subdivisions of these mountains. The inhabitants cling to them with tenacity, and for the administration of government they are convenient and even necessary. But the various sects have often asserted and maintained a semi-independence, and the actual rulers then regulated the affairs of this region to suit their own convenience. Such was the case during the long rule of the Emîr Be-

shîr, of the Shehâb family. In 1830–'31 Ibrahîm Pasha, the warlike son of Muhammed 'Aly of Egypt, subdued the whole of Syria; but he continued the Emîr Beshîr in his government of the Lebanon.

The Allied Powers restored Syria to the Sultân in 1840, who banished the emîr, and he died in exile. Since that time the civil government of these mountains has undergone some modifications, mainly brought about through the intervention of the European governments, and consequent upon the calamitous wars between the Maronites and the Druses. The existing régime was established by the same foreign interference after the massacres of 1860, and the temporary occupation of this country by the French. It has succeeded admirably, and comparative peace and prosperity are assured to this long distracted region.

Religiously, the people of Lebanon are divided into Muhammedans and Metâwileh, Christians and Druses. The two first are found in both the provinces, chiefly at the northern and southern extremities of each, and may exceed thirty-five thousand in number. The Christians of various denominations reside in all parts of Lebanon, and constitute the great body of the inhabitants. The Greeks and Greek Catholics are found mostly in the province of Sidon, and in the district or aklîm of el Kûrah, near Tripoli. They number about seventy-five thousand. The Maronites are by far the most numerous of the Christian sects—over one hundred and twenty-five thousand—and occupy almost exclusively the northern half of Lebanon. Their great stronghold is Aklîm el Kesrawân. The Druses are intermingled with the Christians of all denominations in the southern half of these mountains, and they do not number more than forty thousand.

V.

TOUR THROUGH SOUTHERN LEBANON.

Southern Lebanon.—The Bells of the Mules, and the Song of the Muleteers.—Wandering about the Mountains.—'Ainâb.—Natural Tells.—Perpendicular Strata.—Dukkân 'Ainâb.—Beit Tulhûk.—Original Inhabitants of Lebanon.—The Phœnicians.—Rock-cut Tombs.—'Ain Kesûr.—The Wady below 'Abeih.—'Abeih.—Old Palaces.—Burning of 'Abeih in 1845.—Escape of the Christians in 1860.—Mutaiyar 'Abeih.—Magnificent Prospect.—Kefr Metta.—Villages and Houses on Lebanon.—Beit el Kâdy.—El Fŭzûr.—Traces of Glacial Action.—Tropical Climate and Fruits.—Cloud-bursts.—Jisr el Kâdy.—Mills.—Nahr el Gâbûn and Nahr el Kâdy.—Villages Inhabited by Druses and Maronites.—Bridges, Ancient and Modern.—Adventure with a Panther.—Wild Beasts in the Holy Land in Bible Times.—Bshetfîn.—Stagnation of the Druses and Enterprise of the Christians.—Luxuriant and Fertile Fields.—Deir el Kamar.—The Massacres of 1860.—A Border Land of Antagonistic Tribes.—Revengeful Spirit of the Maronites.—Beit Abu Nakad.—Bteddîn.—The Emîr Beshîr.—Beit Shehâb.—Palace at Bteddîn.—B'aklîn.—Sîmekânîyeh.—Battle-field of the Druses.—Esh Shûf.—Civil Wars.—Description of the Scenery and Geology of Lebanon by Dr. Anderson.—El Judeideh.—Beit Jumblât.—Sheikh Beshîr.—Palaces at Mukhtâreh.—Vicissitudes of Fortune.—Sa'îd Beg Jumblât.—'Ammatûr.—Gray Squirrels.—Oak-grove and Fountain of Bâthir.—Fountains and Cliffs between Bâthir and Jezzîn.—The Auwaly.—Merj Bisry.—Ruins of an Ancient Temple.—Emîr Fakhr ed Dîn Besieged and Captured in a Cavern.—Cascade below Jezzîn.—The Ambassador and his Family.—Jebâ'ah.—Neby Sâfy.—Jerjû'a.—Neby Sîjud.—Jermûk.—Jebel er Rihâm.—Globular Iron-ore.—High-places, Ancient and Modern.—Jezzîn.—Hunting-ground of the Shehâb Emîrs.—Taumât Nîha.—Ancient Highway from Sidon to Damascus.—Kefr Hûneh.—Smuggling Tobacco.—Circular Lake.—Descent to the Lîtâny.—Jisr Bûrghŭz.—Magnificent Prospects.—Meshghŭrah.—Villages upon the South-eastern Slopes of Lebanon.—Rapid Restoration to Prosperity after Civil Wars.—Schools.—Jisr Kŭr'ûn.—Geodes.—The Bŭkâ'a originally a Lake.—Kâmid el Lauz.—Luz.—Sŭghbîn.—Jisr Jubb Jenîn.—Geodes of Chalcedony and Agate.—Vineyards.—Ascent of Lebanon.—View over the Bŭkâ'a.—Manna.—The Cedars of el Bârûk and el Ma'âsir.—Hiram and Solomon.—Fountains of el Bârûk.—Aqueduct of Sheikh Beshîr.—Description of Wady el Fureidîs and Wady 'Ain Zahalteh by Dr. Anderson.—Scenery around 'Ain Zahalteh.—Fountains of Nahr el Kâdy.—Avalanche at Kefr Nebrakh.—Burj el 'Amâd.—Beit el 'Amâd.—Sheikh Khŭttâr.—Cedars at 'Ain Zahalteh.—Sources of the Dâmûr and the Auwaly.—Problem of Fountains.—Sandstone

Formation and Pine-groves.—Btâthir.—Beit 'Abd el Melek.—Silk Factories.—Vineyards.—Bhamdûn during the Civil Wars.—Fossils.—Wady el Ghâbûn.—Bhauwârah, the Residence of Colonel Churchill.—Churchill's History of Lebanon.—A Glorious Prospect.

August 11th.

As yet we have seen only a small part of this goodly mountain, while Northern Lebanon, Cœlesyria, Anti-Lebanon, Damascus, and the regions "beyond Jordan," eastward, remain to be traversed.

Southern Lebanon does not lie within the line of our travels, but we will make a short preliminary excursion through that section. The ride will lead us over mountain scenery of great beauty and fertility seldom visited by travellers, and that will add greatly to the charm of the present tour.

It is pleasant to listen again to the tinkling bells of the mules and the echoing song of the muleteers, and to hear their familiar call of encouragement or caution to the loaded animals, as they wind, one after the other, in Indian file, up and down the rough mountain-paths. There is a peculiar fascination, also, in wandering about these grand mountains, now climbing perilous heights, now descending into profound depths; at one time looking into dark ravines from giddy pinnacles, and at another clinging to the sides of narrow wadies dominated by frowning cliffs, with just enough of the uncertain or the dangerous to keep one upon the alert.

We have, at the very outset of our trip, a striking example of Lebanon scenery. In front and above us is Mutaiyar 'Âinâb, three thousand feet high, with the pretty village of 'Âinâb rising, house above house, up the mountain-side, and half concealed in verdure. On our right are gigantic cliffs, descending abruptly to the highway below us, while on every side are terraces of the vine, the fig, and the olive extending from the very summit of the mountains far down to those long, rolling ridges, clothed with groves of the silvery olive, and dotted here and there with villages nearly hidden away amongst the trees, and beyond them is the boundless expanse of that bright and beautiful sea.

Are those singular mounds, stretching northwards parallel to the sea-shore, natural or artificial?

They are natural tells; and if you examined the one opposite to us, that has upon its summit a dilapidated Druse chapel, or

khŭlweh, you would discover that the rock strata stand perpendicular to the horizon, suggesting the idea that, when the central ridge of the mountain was raised up from below, that part of it was broken off and thrust out seawards, turning the strata perpendicular in the mighty upheaval.

We have now reached the Sîkeh Sultâneh, or regular road from Beirût to Deir el Kamar, the largest Maronite village of Lebanon; and this dukkân of 'Âinâb is the half-way coffee-shop, where the wayfarers generally rest and lunch. The water of the village fountain is pure and deliciously cold.

There seem to be remains of ancient buildings, both below the road and upon the cliffs above the village.

They may be of any age, and are certainly not modern. 'Âinâb belonged to the Druse sheikhs of the Tulhûk family, who were the feudal chiefs of the upper Ghŭrb. It has escaped pillage and conflagration during the civil wars that so often desolated Southern Lebanon, owing to the protection afforded it by those sheikhs.

Who are supposed to have been the inhabitants of these mountains at the time of the Hebrew conquest?

Under one name or another, various tribes of Canaanites occupied the northern parts of Palestine, including Hermon, and in all probability the southern part of Lebanon, which was generally associated with Hermon. When Joshua overthrew the army of the confederate kings, gathered from all those tribes "by the waters of Merom," it is highly probable that many of the fugitives escaped to these mountains, and established themselves here permanently; for there is no evidence that the Hebrews ever again interfered with them, or attempted to penetrate into this region.[1] The western face of Lebanon, overlooking, as it does, the plain and the sea-board, and in close connection with them, may have been governed by the Phœnicians in ancient times, and, in part, at least, inhabited by them. Many of them were wealthy and refined, and such would naturally resort to these mountains to escape the heat of summer, and for reasons of health, just as the present inhabitants of the coast do now.

The Phœnicians held possession of the seaboard for, perhaps,

[1] Josh. xi. 1–18.

two thousand years, but of their sojourn on these beautiful mountains they have left no trace. Like the Hebrews, they seldom inscribed any record upon their monuments or tombs. The sarcophagus of Ashmanezer, found at Sidon, had a long inscription; but that tomb was evidently of Egyptian origin, and neither before nor since its discovery have I seen a single word on any sarcophagus or tomb made by the Phœnicians. The Greeks and Romans, on the contrary, placed a record upon almost everything they constructed. So did the Saracens, and especially the Arabs.

Almost the only indications of former inhabitants on these mountains are the ancient rock-cut tombs, and even those are comparatively few and very rude. They are simply graves cut in the horizontal face of the cliffs, or hewn out of detached blocks, or sunk into the flat surface of single rocks. They are from five to seven feet long, two feet broad, and eighteen inches deep, and were originally covered with heavy stone lids, about eight feet long, three feet broad, and two feet thick, having the corners raised more or less. Generally those rock-cut tombs are found in groups. There is such a group above Shemlân, and another near the road between it and 'Aitâth; but none of them have any ornamentation, nor are there any inscriptions. Hence it is impossible to discover anything in regard to those who made them. The present inhabitants of Lebanon are a mingled race of uncertain origin—Maronites, Greeks, Druses, and Metâwileh—and none amongst them can tell who were their ancestors or from whence they came.

That hamlet of 'Ain Kesûr, with its small church, which we are approaching, is literally founded on the rock, being built upon the exposed surface of an unbroken layer of limestone which underlies the entire village. The church occupies an ancient site, and below it are several of those rock-cut tombs already described. Along the road between this and 'Arâmôn, in the valley west of us, are some larger graves, hewn out of isolated blocks, all empty, of course.

This long wady below 'Âbeih, around which we have been riding, with its well-cultivated terraces rising, rank above rank, from depths a thousand feet and more quite up to the village, forms one of Nature's striking and beautiful amphitheatres, and challenges the admiration of the beholder from every point of view.

It does indeed, and I seldom pass this way without stopping, now and then, to enjoy the prospect. It is seen to the best advantage late in the day, when evening verges towards night. Then the whole valley is filled with the golden light of the setting sun, and as the darkness deepens the little pools far below in the terraced vineyards and gardens gleam "like stars on the sea." The village of 'Âbeih itself is quite pretty, with its large, attractive houses and curious old palaces. It is situated on the northern side of the mountain, and commands a noble outlook over valley, hill, and plain and the wide, wide sea, sweeping round to Beirût, and extending towards Tripoli far as the eye can follow.

Those old palaces were mainly erected by the Emîr Nŭsr ed Dîn in 1315, but have been several times partially destroyed and again rebuilt. Many tragedies have been enacted in and around them during the five or six centuries of their existence. In 1845 the Druses under Sheikh Hammûd Abu Nakad attacked 'Âbeih in force, and quickly set on fire the houses of the Maronites who had fled into the palaces, killing those of the men who were not able to escape in time. An officer of the Pasha, who was then in the Lebanon, came to 'Âbeih, and finally put an end to the fight just in time to save from indiscriminate slaughter the whole Maronite population. I was in the village at the time, an unwilling witness to that shocking scene. During the massacres of 1860 the Christians of this place fled to the plain, and escaped to Beirût, where they found an asylum in the houses of native and foreign residents.

It is quiet and peaceful enough at present, and had we the time we might visit the Druse High-school here, on the left, the American Mission Seminary, the old palaces, and other places of interest. We will pass through the village to 'Ain 'Ali, as the fountain is called, and from there ascend the mountain-ridge to the celebrated outlook near a ruined Khŭlweh, on the top of Mutaiyar 'Âbeih.

It is, indeed, well worth the climb to stand upon this overhanging cliff and gaze upon that wonderful prospect! Notwithstanding your repeated allusions to it, I am taken wholly by surprise, and give up the attempt to comprehend depths so profound, and scenery so vast and so varied. One can see down to the banks of the Dâmûr, and faintly hear the roar of that foaming river; and

then that sublime assemblage of mountains, and wadys, and ravines, of gorges, and chasms, and cliffs, who can describe it! In winter, when the entire range of Lebanon is buried under the deep snow, this prospect must be magnificent.

Mutaiyar 'Âbeih is more than three thousand feet above yonder sea, and commands a panorama of almost unequal extent in this region, and also of great historical interest. Not to dwell upon the mighty sweep of that beautiful sea on the west, and of the magnificent mountain scenery of the Lebanon range on the east, extending from the far south to the distant north, and culminating in Jebel el Kenîseh and Sŭnnîn, nearly the entire seaboard of ancient Phœnicia lies outstretched before the beholder. Though Tyre itself is hidden from view by a projecting point of land, the Ladder of Tyre, south of it, is clearly seen; while old Sidon appears surprisingly near. To the north are the plain and the city of Beirût, the coast of Jebeil and el Batrûn, the ancient Gebal and Botrys, and the bold promontory of Theoprosopon, beyond which is the city of Tripoli, with its spacious bay; and farther still is the island of Ruâd, the famous seat of the Arvadites. I have counted more than sixty villages and towns from this lofty stand-point.

But we cannot linger here, and must proceed on our way. Lead your horse carefully along the edge of the cliff, and down these low terraces, and in half an hour we shall reach the village of Kefr Metta, on the southern slope of the ridge, and from there a steep and winding descent through groves of pine will bring us, in about an hour, to the Dâmûr, at Jisr el Kâdy. There we will lunch near one of those khâns and dukkâns, found everywhere, at convenient stopping places, along the roads in these mountains.

With the difference in size and situation the villages on Lebanon are very much alike, and, I should suppose, that distance always lends enchantment to their appearance.

They are naturally built around the fountain as a centre, and to it all roads and paths converge. The houses are low, square, and solidly built, rarely of more than one story, and seldom exceeding three rooms, with one door and two windows to each. The roofs are flat and covered with earth, which is "rolled" in winter, to make it water-proof. Such houses are as much a part of the mountain

as the terraced fields, vineyards, and cliffs by which they are surrounded, and upon which they are built; and it is this grouping together of house and vine, terrace and cliff, that gives to these mountain villages and the magnificent scenery which they command their peculiar beauty and special attractiveness.

Kefr Metta has long been the home of Beit el Kâdy, a family that has furnished most of the judges for the Druse nation on Lebanon. I have been acquainted with several of those judges, some of whom were learned and dignified, and their legal record was an honor to their position and their people. The younger branches of the family, who lived in Kefr Metta in 1860, were said to have participated in the massacres of the Christians at Deir el Kamar, and were obliged to leave the country to escape condign punishment for their part in that horrible tragedy.

About an hour's ride below this village there is a remarkable group of cliffs and fissures, on the right bank of the river gorge, called el Fŭzûr, which is well worth visiting. The ride from Kefr Metta down to the Fŭzûr is interesting, particularly to geological students of Lebanon. Passing on the west side of the village, and descending by a rough path for half a mile, one comes upon a large formation of amorphous trap and globular basalt. That formation extends northward under the limestone ridges upon which are situated Kefr Metta, 'Abeih, 'Ain Kesûr, 'Ainâb, Shemlân, 'Aitâth, Sûk el Ghŭrb, and other villages. It is at least one hundred feet thick; above it is limestone, and below it generally sandstone, which rests upon limestone. Through that lower limestone, which is very hard and compact, the Dâmûr has worn its way; and in the cliffs on the north side are the fissures of el Fŭzûr, near the bottom of the river valley, and about five miles above its entrance into the sea.

The Fŭzûr itself is a great rift, extending down southward through the cliff. At the upper end the perpendicular sides are about twenty-five feet apart; but they gradually approach each other, in the descent, until they are only five feet asunder at the lower end. The fissure is about three hundred feet long and nearly one hundred feet high. The descent, through the fissure, down which the path winds to the mill, which is some two hundred feet above the bed of the river, is exceedingly steep. The water is

brought from the river to the mill by a canal, which winds picturesquely along perpendicular cliffs for half a mile. A little to the south of the main fissure just described is another, parallel to it, but in no place are the sides more than six feet apart. Unlike the other, it narrows upwards, and the sides meet above. Rocks have, at some time, fallen into it, upon which one can penetrate the chasm for thirty or forty feet; and a stone dropped into the abyss is heard for some seconds rolling away far below. Besides these two fissures there are others running transversely, and descending directly south towards the river.

Although that labyrinth of rocks and clefts is interesting in itself, yet it would not on that account alone be entitled to special notice. It is what certain parts of the Fŭzûr indicate and suggest that imparts to it peculiar interest. The sides of the main fissure, throughout its entire length and from top to bottom, have been polished by the action, as I believe, of a glacier. In that process the polishing body, during its passage through the fissure, has drawn lines and scratches and fine striæ with surprising regularity, descending with the descent of the cleft itself. As the fissure narrows downwards towards the lower end, where it opens out on to the river-bed, the glacier would necessarily assume the shape and form of a huge wedge. That would render its passage through the cleft very slow and regular, which accounts for the beauty of the polish and the regularity of the striæ.

The rock, being intensely hard and unstratified, received a uniform polish; and, being protected by a remarkable curve of the cliff on the upper side, like the moulding of an immense cornice, by which the fissure was overarched and sheltered from the sun, the polish would remain as long as the everlasting mountain itself. In certain places below that natural cornice water has trickled down, on the upper side of the fissure, coating the surface with a stalagmitic incrustation, whose lines are nearly perpendicular to the striæ of the polished surface. Where that incrustation has peeled off the striæ are shown in unbroken continuity.

During my rambles over Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon I had not discovered any traces of the action of glaciers which appeared distinct and unmistakable. I had not seen the Fŭzûr, with its po-

lished surfaces, more perfect and extensive than any I had visited either in Europe or America. It is this glacial action which imparts special interest to that locality, and which is corroborated by the appearance of the parallel fissure. That one is widest at the bottom, and narrowest at the top, where it is also so covered over by rocks that no glacier could have possibly entered it. Hence its sides are as rough as when first split apart. The same is true of all the neighboring fissures, where glacial action was equally impossible. If we have there sufficient proof that, in some former period in the earth's history, el Fŭzûr was filled with a glacier, the conclusion is certain that at that time the greater part, if not the whole, of Lebanon, down to the sea itself, was buried under enormous accumulations of snow and ice.

El Fŭzûr is in the secluded and sheltered gorge of the river, and but five hundred feet above the sea-shore. In the immediate neighborhood are two or three houses and the mill. The place is known as el Muwafukah, or the fortunate. The climate in that sheltered nook being almost tropical, everything planted there grows with surprising luxuriance, and is well watered by the canal which turns the mill. In the present condition of our earth neither frost nor snow ever invade that spot, and the orange-tree and the taro-plant flourish all the year round in the open air. If these mountains have been covered with thick ice since the cliffs of el Fŭzûr were rent asunder, the geological phenomena and features of Lebanon, as well as its natural history and productions, present a most interesting problem for science to solve. Apparently, it has required a great extent of time and many physical convulsions to bring hills, ridges, valleys, and plains to their present fertile condition; and during those countless ages the forces of nature have accomplished an amount of abrasion, excavation, and degradation which astonishes even the imagination.

Careful search may yet discover other indications of the action of glaciers in these mountains; but, from the nature of the rock, they will be found only in places protected from the frost, snow, rain, and sun. The cliffs of Lebanon are continually adding to the accumulations of débris along their bases by the breaking off of large masses of rock and rubbish; and thus all traces of glacial

action are obliterated from their sides or buried deep by the talus at the base. There is also another agency constantly operating in this country to obliterate all traces of glaciers. The extraordinary cloud-burst, called seil by the Arabs, sweeps away everything that opposes its overwhelming floods. I have often examined the tracks of those cloud-bursts, and been appalled at the wild havoc they make. As hardly a season now passes without some part of the mountains being swept by them, they would, in the long lapse of ages since glaciers disappeared from Lebanon, have either washed away or buried up all traces of terminal moraines.

But here we are at Jisr el Kâdy, which, I suppose, derives its name from one of the family of el Kâdy, by whom it was built. We will see what kind of refreshments the dukkânjy has to offer, while we take our noonday rest, with the noisy river at our feet, and those clattering mills on either side of us. We have now returned to the regular road between Beirût and Deir el Kamar.

The two main branches of the Dâmûr here unite; Nahr el Ghâbûn comes from the north-east, Nahr el Kâdy from the east, augmented by the streams from the region around Btâthir and 'Ain Dâra. The great fountains of Nahr el Kâdy below 'Ain Zahalteh are, however, the true permanent source of this river.

Those valleys, with their tributaries, are studded with villages, clinging to the declivities on both sides, and embowered in vineyards and mulberry-gardens. They enhance the beauty and interest of this wild and picturesque scenery.

They are inhabited by Druses and Maronites, the former being in the majority; and it is owing to that fact that, during civil wars, the Druses get the upper hand and commit atrocious crimes upon the Christians, as exemplified in the massacres of 1860.

It is time for us to leave this cool and refreshing retreat, above the noisy, rushing river, and commence the steep ascent of the mountain. We have nearly three hours yet to ride before reaching our tents pitched in the western suburb of Deir el Kamar.

Jisr el Kâdy is not likely to be swept away by any torrents with which the Dâmûr can assault it, for its buttresses, on either side, are founded upon the everlasting rock.

Substantial as it is, and high above the foaming river that now

darts down the smooth and worn channel below its ample arches, there have been times, even within my experience, when the Dâmûr overflowed the topmost stone on the parapet of that bridge. To resist such winter floods and summer cloud-bursts, or seils, bridges, in this mountainous country, must not only be solidly built, but the arches, also, must be wide and high. The Roman bridge-builders were aware of this necessity, and hence the strong and lofty arches which they constructed over even insignificant streams, specimens of which are still to be seen at Nahr Abu el Aswad, between Tyre and Sidon, and at Mu'âmaltein, north of the Bay of Jûneh, on the road to Tripoli.

That group of rocky pinnacles, on the right of our path, recalls a curious incident which occurred in this vicinity a few years ago. Passing this way to Deir el Damar with her servant, one of the American missionary ladies was astonished to see a nimr, or panther, stretched out upon a rock not far from the road. Not desiring a closer interview, they did not disturb the quiet of his rest, and were glad to pass on unmolested.

It is surprising that such wild animals can hold their own in a region so thickly populated as this.

They are still found in a few places, and occasionally shot and killed by parties who go out in pursuit of them. When Ibrahîm Pasha disarmed the inhabitants of this country, the wild beasts became so numerous and destructive in certain districts that he was obliged to restore arms to those who were specially exposed to their depredations. Such facts serve to illustrate the divine promise to the Hebrews: "I will not drive them [the Canaanites] out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee."[1] They also render altogether credible the Biblical accounts of the presence of wild beasts in Palestine in ancient times, when the people had no more formidable weapons than the bow, the sword, and the spear.

Formerly this road was very rough and the ascent fatiguing, but Rustum Pasha, the Governor-general of the Lebanon, has greatly improved it, and before long carriages will be able to drive all the way from Beirût to Deir el Kamar and Bteddîn.

[1] Exod. xxiii. 29.

There can scarcely be finer scenery on Lebanon than this—above, around, and far below us—the mountains, the wadys, the Dâmûr valley, and the distant sea.

The prospect is, indeed, as grand as it is beautiful, and as varied as it is verdant; but your progress through the Lebanon will be a continual advance from glory to glory, and you will find it difficult to decide which is the most beautiful view.



DURZY AND DURZIEH.

That small Druse village, called Bshetfîn, which we have just passed through, remains in appearance just what it was when I came to this country. It has not increased in size nor advanced in any degree. If half the inhabitants had gone to sleep fifty years

ago and awoke up to-day, they would have noticed but little change about the place since they began their long slumber. Even the picturesque oak-trees that surround the village do not appear to have grown much in half a century.

In these respects Bshetfîn is a fair representative of many other Druse villages. They are stagnant, and make very little progress in any direction. Some of them have declined both in population and property. That may be ascribed, in part, to the social and religious customs of the people, and partly to those civil wars and massacres which desolated Lebanon at different times from 1842 to 1860. Many Druses became deeply implicated in those ruinous conflicts, and found it necessary to emigrate to the Haurân to escape punishment for their crimes. Not a few villages were thus almost deserted, and the Druse population of this part of Lebanon is probably not greater now than it was fifty years ago. Their feudal sheikhs and emîrs have also lost their ancient position and power, and can no longer protect and support the numerous relatives, retainers, and servants that formerly depended upon them.

The Druses will not become artisans, and few of them learn any mechanical trade; neither will they "open shops" in the markets. Their one occupation is agriculture, and that on a small scale. Hence they have become poor, while the native Christians eagerly pursue every kind of profitable occupation, and are rapidly growing in wealth, intelligence, and numbers.

We have now reached the top of this long ascent from Jisr el Kâdy, and turning eastward we will ride through mulberry, fig, and olive gardens for half an hour along the north side of this deep valley. Our tents are awaiting us in an enclosed field at the west end of Deir el Kamar, where I have often pitched on former occasions.

Nowhere in all Palestine have we seen such luxuriant and fertile fields, or such carefully cultivated terraces.

That is due to the abundance of water, brought from a considerable distance, whose little rills come foaming down the terraces like miniature cascades, and irrigate every available spot where a tree, a vine, or a vegetable can be made to grow. We shall soon come in sight of the palaces at Bteddîn, situated across the wady, and higher up the mountain-side.

August 11th. Evening.

Your friend, Mu'âlim Dâûd, kindly accompanied me through the town, in the cool of the evening, and during our walk he gave me a graphic account of the varied fortunes of his family in connection with the civil wars, conflagrations, and massacres which have occurred in Deir el Kamar within the last forty years. I was surprised at the appearance of the town, and could hardly believe that the houses, churches, and convents had all been burnt so recently and again rebuilt. Mu'âlîm Dâûd, however, informed me that the stone of which they were constructed was of a kind which suffered very little from fire, so that the walls were generally left standing.

That is true of nearly all the houses on these mountains, and hence the work of reconstruction is greatly facilitated. Deir el Kamar was rebuilt, after the massacres of 1860, at the expense of the Turkish Government, and the houses are now about as good as ever. But the population is much reduced; a large proportion of men and boys were murdered in 1860, and of those who escaped not a few have settled elsewhere, nor will they again make Deir el Kamar their home. Who can wonder at that, in view of the terrible calamities which have befallen them and their families?

Mu'âlîm Dâûd estimated the present inhabitants at six thousand, which he said was considerably less than what it was before the massacre. That seemed to me below the actual number, for the town extends more than a mile along the southern slope of the mountain. But the Mu'âlîm said that some of the houses were still uninhabited. Pointing to a broad terrace overlooking the valley, he assured me that, in the summer of 1860, over five hundred of his fellow-townsmen were slaughtered in cold blood in one of the large houses there, and their bodies thrown into the yard below. The number of the Christians that were killed by the Druses, in Deir el Kamar alone, Mu'âlîm Dâûd said, was over one thousand. It is evident, from all I learned of the massacre, that it was the determined purpose of the Druses to exterminate the male population of the town; and the details of that ferocious butchery, given on the spot by an eye-witness, recalled to my mind some of the accounts in the Bible of similar slaughter, often recurring in the history of this strange country in ancient times.

This has always been a border-land, and peopled by many antagonistic tribes, now dwelling amicably together, now engaged in bloody feuds, subjugating, expelling, or exterminating one another in endless succession. And it is to be feared that the massacre of 1860 was not the last enacted on these mountains.

So I apprehend; for even my kind guide—when showing me the Druse quarter, elevated above the rest of the town, and now covered with shapeless ruins—said: "There is all that remains of the habitations of our enemies. Thank God, no Druse can now put his foot in Deir el Kamar, and, if God will, we shall yet have far greater revenge for our kindred and the desolation of our homes."

Such, no doubt, is the cherished hope of all his co-religionists; and the realization of it will be left to their children, as a family legacy never to be forgotten. But all their attempts hitherto have proved failures. Three times have I seen the effort to subjugate or annihilate the Druses set all the Lebanon in a blaze, and each succeeding defeat of the Maronites was more crushing and disastrous than the one before it. Had it not been for the timely intervention of the European Powers, and the occupation of the country by the French after the massacres of 1860, not only the Maronites, but the Christian population of these mountains, would have been nearly annihilated by the Druses and Moslems, assisted, as they were, by the Turkish Government. Let us hope that a better religion, better education, and a better government will ultimately eradicate these fierce passions, so that Druse and Maronite may dwell together in harmony and peace on this goodly mountain.

Amongst the ruins you saw were those of the houses and palaces of the sheikhs and begs of Beit Abu Nakad, an ancient family from the Hejâz that aided in the conquest of Egypt and the north of Africa in the seventh century. From thence they emigrated to the south of Lebanon about the twelfth century; but they are rarely mentioned in the confused annals of the mountains until about two hundred years ago. From that time onward they figure largely in all the wars which desolated Lebanon. They have been a fierce and turbulent "family," and their story is a perpetual repetition of bloody feuds, in which they have often been nearly exterminated. Their residences in Deir el Kamar have been

burnt several times and their property destroyed. Owing to the leading part which they took in the recent massacres, they have been forbidden to enter the town, their habitations were levelled with the ground, and the very materials carried away to rebuild the houses of their enemies.

August 12th.

Instead of passing through the town we will take the road below it, which leads along the base of the hill, and then across the valley and up the mountain to the famous palace of the Emîr Beshîr at Bteddîn. The smaller palace which he built for his mother is seen in the mulberry-gardens, and that of his eldest son is higher up the hill to the south-west. The only thing worthy of notice near them is the canal which supplies the palaces and the surrounding gardens with water brought from the fountains at 'Ain Zahalteh, about eight miles to the north-east of Bteddîn.

The Emîr Beshîr resided at Bteddîn in great dignity and state, and for many years governed all Lebanon as an independent prince. He ruled with a strong will and an iron hand, but was expelled from the country in 1840, when Syria was restored to the Sultân by the allied powers of Europe, and he died an exile in Constantinople. He was the last of a long line of governing emîrs of the Shehâb family. Their genealogical record extends through more than forty generations. But their day is over, and their glory has departed; nor is there any probability that another Shehâb will ever again rise to power either in Lebanon, in Wady et Teim, or in the Haurân, where they originally dwelt, and from whence they long ago passed over into these mountains.

Forty generations! Do the Shehâb emîrs carry up their pedigree to an antiquity so high as that?

There are other things about Lebanon besides magnificent scenery quite worthy of attention. Not the least remarkable is the history and the character of its inhabitants. There were no less than twenty-four feudal families in these mountains, and some of them boasted of a pedigree which, for antiquity, puts to the blush that of the most aristocratic dynasties in Europe. The emîr who called on us in Shemlân traces his genealogical tree to Paradise, where its roots were nourished. He claims direct descent from the

Prophet; and from Muhammed any Moslem chronologer will carry the line up to Ishmael, from whence to Adam in Eden they follow the Biblical list. The accuracy with which such long chronologies and pedigrees are kept not only illustrates Biblical genealogies, but increases our confidence in their reliability.

And thus the chronicles of the Shehâb family run through forty-one successive generations of governing emîrs to the death of the Emîr Beshîr. There are several points of resemblance between those emîrs and the judges and kings of Judah and Israel. Some were good and wise; others were wicked and did evil in the sight of the Lord, and were punished. There were family feuds, rivalries, and murders not a few; and there were various incidents, accidents, and anecdotes to diversify the uniformity of their history. As amongst the Hebrews, there was, at first, but one line of princes; afterwards the Shehâb family was divided into two, and finally three branches—one in Upper Wady et Teim at Râsheiya, another in Lower Wady et Teim at Hâsbeiya, and the third on Lebanon. The governing families of the Hebrews passed away long ago, but the Shehâbs are still in the land, though greatly impoverished and fallen from their former position of dignity and power.

This esplanade, or medân, as you call it, presents some idea of the wealth and power of the Emîr Beshîr; and the view is not only grand, it is magnificent. The palace occupied one side, covered arcades, retainers' and servants' rooms, kitchens and stables the other two, and it is open towards the valley, Deir el Kamar, and the distant sea on the fourth side. The palace is built upon the cliff, and is about two hundred and fifty feet above the valley, and three thousand feet above the Mediterranean. Below it the declivities of the mountain sink down to the bottom of the wady which lies between Bteddîn and Deir el Kamar. The decorations about the palace, its carved doors and windows, its marble floors and halls, its inlaid walls and painted ceilings, its courts, fountains, and baths, retain the mere semblance of their former glory. The palace was used by the Government for many years as a barracks, and most of the fine marble has been carried away by the officers, and the whole establishment was allowed to go to ruin. Since the massacres of 1860 it has become the summer residence of the Gov-



PALACE AT BTEDDÎN.

ernor-general, and it has been repaired and enlarged. The water from the canal supplies the palace and the gardens, and then plunges down the cliff into the valley—a foaming, noisy cataract.

Mukhtârah is the next place we are to visit this morning. Being two hours distant, it is time we were on our way there.

That beautifully wooded village of B'aklîn, some two miles west of Bteddîn, is the stronghold of the Druses, in the Shûf, as this district is called; and there many a battle has been fought in the past, between the rival sheikhs and emîrs of Lebanon. A short distance ahead of us is another celebrated battle-field, near the small hamlet of es Sîmekânîyeh. There seems to be no reason why that region should have been the chosen theatre of so many contests, except that it is situated nearly midway between el Mukhtârah and Bteddîn; and yet several fights have occurred there during the present generation. Indeed, we are surrounded with battle-fields, and nearly every hamlet and village has its tragic story.

Native historians speak of long periods in which this district of esh Shûf was reduced to a howling wilderness by the contests for its possession between rival chiefs of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon. Not only were the villages burnt, and the people butchered or driven away, but the olive-groves, the mulberry fields, and other species of property were purposely destroyed. And it is one of the best possible proofs of the natural fertility of this part of the mountain that it recovered so rapidly from those ruinous visitations. Most of these picturesque villages, with their olive and mulberry plantations, their fig and walnut trees, their poplar and oak groves, their vine-clad terraces climbing to the clouds, have been desolated by the fires of civil war more than once since I first saw them. And yet that wide expanse of mountain and valley, drained by the river Auwaly from the fountains at el Bârûk, on the north, to Jezzîn, on the south, is about the best wooded, most populous, and the most flourishing on Lebanon.

Dr. H. J. Anderson, of Lieutenant Lynch's Expedition to the Dead Sea, thus speaks of the scenery which now opens out before us: "After passing es Sîmekânîyeh the country assumes an aspect of grandeur not surpassed in any part of the Libanus. The noble scenery of el Mukhtârah now presents itself, with its vast masses and startling contrasts, its turreted cliffs and dark defiles, its sudden barriers and winding outlets, conducting the traveller gradually down into the singular valley of Nahr el Bârûk." And of the geology of this region, which we are to traverse for the next five hours, he says: "Vertical sections of the mountain-side show an

alternation of massive and stratified limestone, resembling at first view the successive deposits, sometimes so difficult to account for, in the distribution of materials derived from the detritus of plutonic rocks. In the neighborhood of el Judeideh the plough of the husbandman frequently turns up casts of enormous Strombi and Naticæ. In general it may be said of the Lebanine groups between Deir el Kamar and Jezzîn that they possess every variety of appearance, from the most porous to the most compact, and from the most thoroughly silicified to the most completely disintegrated and broken down. The colors are as various as the consistence, running from a pale yellow to a dark blue and purplish black."[1]

Dr. Anderson found this vicinity exceptionally rich in casts of a great variety of fossils; and here, above the road, you see them protruding from the perpendicular bank in countless numbers. The strombi are extremely compact, and I have collected specimens weighing several pounds. These geological phenomena form but one of the many attractions for the traveller through this magnificent region of Southern Lebanon.

The long descent from el Judeideh, through olive-groves and under walnut-trees, down to this bridge over the Bârûk River, is very picturesque; and so is the bridge, with its noisy cascades above and below, while all around it is embowered and nearly concealed by a forest of waving silver poplar and wide-spreading sycamore, and the stream is almost hidden from view by thick bushes and twining vines. Not having expected a scene so romantic, I gaze upon it with as much delight as though I was the first to discover it. Shall we ride up to that conspicuous palace of the Jumblâts, so beautifully situated in this wild valley?

By no means. We should not be able to decline the hospitality of the young begs without positive rudeness. I have spent more than one agreeable night there, and if time permitted we might pass a pleasant week with the present representatives of Beit Jumblât, who now occupy that palace at el Mukhtârah.

Beit Jumblât was the most wealthy and influential "house" amongst the Druses; and, with the single exception of the Emîr Fakhr ed Dîn Ma'ân, Sheikh Beshîr Jumblât was the most illustri-

[1] Ex. to the Dead Sea, pp. 92, 94.

ous prince of that singular people. Though the Jumblâts were celebrated for many generations in the region about Aleppo and Killis, and, subsequently, at Ma'ârret en N'amân and Jebel el A'alah, they were not known on Lebanon until about 1630; nor did the family rise to great distinction before the close of the last century. Then Sheikh Beshîr became the most powerful leader in these mountains. The old palaces in el Mukhtârah were built by him, and he brought the water to them from the great fountain of the river Auwaly, at el Bârûk, six miles to the north-east of this place, and at great labor and expense, the canal being cut through hard rock along perpendicular cliffs for a considerable part of the distance. But Sheikh Beshîr was the wealthiest prince in Syria, and his possessions were scattered far and wide, over mountain and valley, hill and plain, yielding, according to native report, the fabulous income of fifty thousand pounds.

For many years he was the ally, then the rival, and finally the declared enemy, of the Emîr Beshîr Shehâb, the recognized prince of the mountains by the Turkish Government. The Emîr's party ultimately triumphed; and Sheikh Beshîr Jumblât, defeated and driven out of Lebanon, was beheaded in 1825 by the Pasha of Acre, at the instigation, it is said, of Muhammed 'Aly, Governor of Egypt. The palace at el Mukhtârah was plundered and burnt, and the estates of Beit Jumblât were confiscated. But when Emîr Beshîr Shehâb was himself expelled from the country in 1840 by the Allied Powers, and Syria was restored to the Sultân, the sons of Sheikh Beshîr Jumblât were allowed to return to their homes, and much of their ancient estate was given back to them.

In the revolutions of those days the palace of the Emîr Beshîr Shehâb at Bteddîn — built in part of marble, and adorned with columns taken from the palace at el Mukhtârah—was in turn plundered and burnt by the Druses of the Jumblât faction. These are only examples of numberless similar revolts, triumphs, and reverses of the ruling families of the Lebanon, without alluding to the treachery, torture, assassination, and murder that preceded, accompanied, and followed them. Indeed, the history of these mountains is little else than a chronicle of such retributive tragedies.

Most of the present palace was built by Sa'îd Beg, the son of



THE PALACE OF SA'ÎD BEG JUMBLÂT AT EL MUKHTÂRAH.

Sheikh Beshîr Jumblât; and his story runs sadly through a period of forty years, during which civil wars often desolated Lebanon, and he was frequently accused of treachery and cruelty by his enemies. Involved, willingly or otherwise, in the massacres of 1860, Sa'îd Beg Jumblât was taken prisoner by the Turkish Government, tried in Beirût, and barely escaped with his life, owing to the powerful influence of the British Commissioner. He was, however, far gone in consumption, and was removed from prison to a private

house only to die. The family has been, and is still, in a certain sense, under the protection of the British Government; and I have felt a deep interest in their troubled history and declining fortunes.

We are now entering the beautiful groves of 'Ammatûr, the pride and boast of this region.

A veritable paradise of fruitful trees, dense bushes, trailing vines, and blooming flowers; vocal with the song of birds, the hum of bees, and the murmur of running water. Nowhere else have we found such noble walnut-trees; and here, too, I see, for the first time in the East, genuine gray squirrels, leaping from branch to branch as nimbly as they do in the far West.

They are not so large, but in all other respects they appear to be the same, and are found wherever there are walnut-trees like these. But, notwithstanding the peaceful attractions of this earthly paradise, with its trees and flowers, birds and fountains, and even squirrels, the inhabitants of 'Ammatûr, mostly Druses, are divided into hostile factions, and are constantly quarrelling, and sometimes murdering each other. We shall ride through this wilderness of verdure and beauty for more than half an hour.

The road now makes a long bend inwards to pass around a deep chasm on our right, beyond which is the noble oak-grove of Bâthir. There we will lunch near a large fountain which flows out from under perpendicular cliffs that tower upwards to the clouds. A path winds as best it can up those stupendous ramparts to Nîha, B'adarân, and other villages situated some two thousand feet higher up on the mountains. The stream goes bravely to work from its very source; drives a mill directly below it; then another, and still another, which seem to hang on the very edge of the precipice down which the sturdy young brook plunges in noisy cascades, a hundred feet high and more, in its eagerness to join the rushing river of el Bârûk in the valley far below.

There are other brooks farther on whose fountains are hidden away in the upper regions of Lebanon, from whence their streams come tumbling down the cliffs high overhead, as though falling from the clear blue sky. In fact, the entire ride from here to Jezzîn is extremely romantic; nor is the magnificent scenery of this region destitute of historical incidents and thrilling adventures.

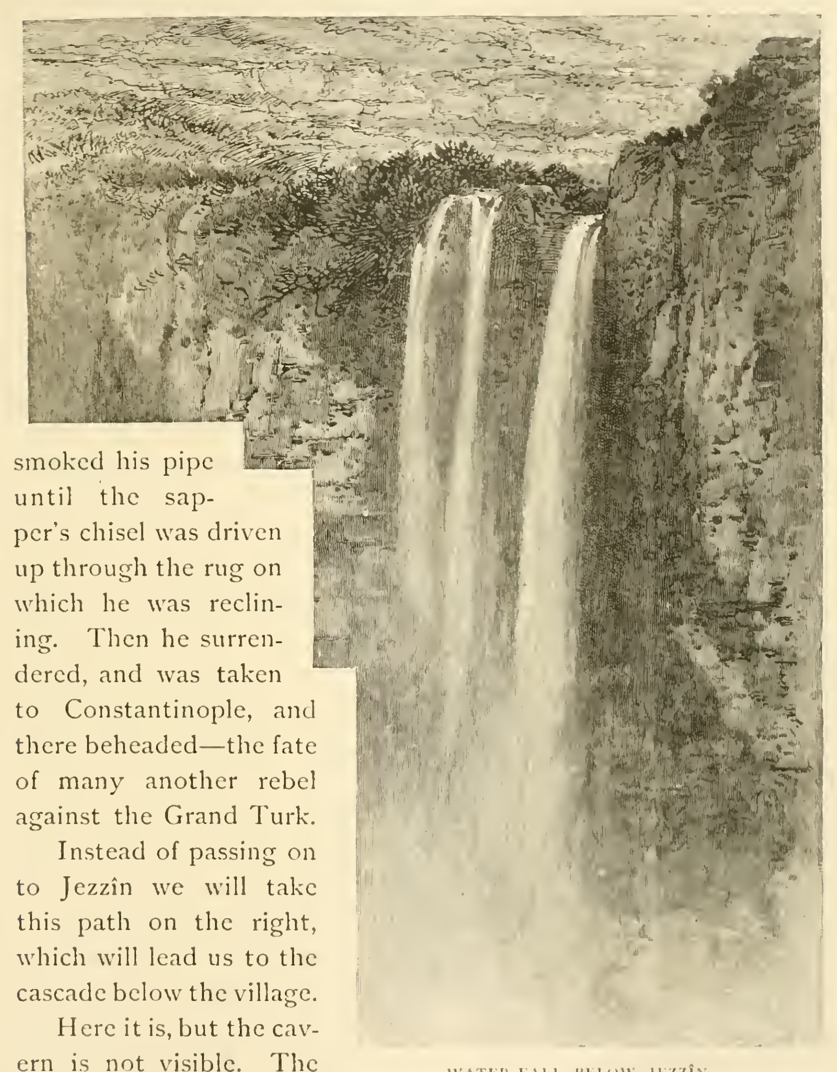
I am constantly surprised at the endless variety in the appearance of these cliffs. They do not present one uniform and monotonous wall perpendicular to the horizon, but massive buttresses are pushed out here and there to the fore-front, high above the deep gorge of the river, and then the line of cliffs retreats behind castellated peaks, and recedes far into the mountain, protected by rocky turrets and flanked by unassailable bastions.

Those extraordinary and nearly Alpine proportions, these fantastic shapes, those inaccessible heights, and these profound depths, are all mainly the result of a remarkable disintegration. Immense masses of rock, great blocks, bowlders, and slabs have been split off, or rolled down from the mountain, and lie at the bottom of the cliffs in wild confusion, and far below runs the Jezzîn branch of the river Auwaly. The profound gorge of that river trends sharply round to the west, and through it the Auwaly finds its way to the sea, between gigantic cliffs of gray limestone.

At the turning-point, where the stream from Jezzîn unites with the river of el Bârûk, and the two combined form the Auwaly, is a pretty little plain called Merj Bisry, covered with fertile fields and cultivated gardens, and bordered along the banks of the river with oleander and myrtle bushes. On that quiet and secluded "meadow" of Bisry, as the name implies, are some remains of an ancient temple, nearly buried beneath the débris of the overhanging mountain, and further concealed by thickets and thorn bushes. There are no inscriptions, and but three or four columns, probably of Egyptian origin, and brought there by the Phœnicians. There, too, one is reminded of the warlike and revengeful nature of the Druses, for Merj Bisry is celebrated for many a bloody skirmish in former times between rival families in this part of Lebanon.

It was amidst this grand scenery that the celebrated Druse chieftain, Fakhr ed Dîn, terminated a long career of rebellion against the Sultân. High in the face of that limestone cliff, called Kŭl'at Nîha, some distance to the east of Merj Bisry, and apparently inaccessible from above or below, is Mughârat Nîha, a cavern in which the Emîr Fakhr ed Dîn is said to have been besieged for some years. When compelled to forsake that unassailable retreat by the poisoning of his water supply, he took refuge in a cave under the

cascade of Jezzîn. There he remained until the cave was sapped from below. As the story relates, the sturdy old rebel calmly smoked his pipe until the sapper's chisel was driven up through the rug on which he was reclining. Then he surrendered, and was taken to Constantinople, and there beheaded—the fate of many another rebel against the Grand Turk.



WATER-FALL BELOW JEZZÎN.

Instead of passing on to Jezzîn we will take this path on the right, which will lead us to the cascade below the village.

Here it is, but the cavern is not visible. The stream from the fountain of Jezzîn plunges down this perpendicular cliff for about two hundred and fifty feet. I have spent several hours, first and last, at this cataract, and have stood upon the brink and dropped

my line for more than two hundred and forty feet without touching the sides of the cliff. Descending into the deep chasm, on the western side, I have filled my cup from the vapor of the water at its base, as it fell in misty rain from seeming clouds above. This water-fall is the most magnificent spectacle of the kind in Syria. During the winter the rush of the water and the roar of the cataract are quite deafening; but in summer most of the stream is exhausted by irrigation. At present you see but a small stream of water tumbling over the precipice, with its silvery spray swaying hither and thither at the will of the breeze produced by its descent down the face of the cliff.

The approach of night amidst such scenes is strangely fascinating. There is a sudden quiet all around — a stillness as of expectancy pervades the atmosphere; the birds are silent, and only the rippling water, gliding onwards and over the profound abyss, sounds distinct and clear like the accompaniment of a song when the words have ceased; and the desire is "to sit on rocks," and "to muse o'er flood and fell."

All very true; but, before darkness overtakes us, we had better seek our tents, which are pitched in a beautiful grove of walnut-trees west of the village of Jezzîn.

August 12th. Evening.

We are spending a delightful evening under the friendly shelter of these trees with their wide-spreading branches; and the air is decidedly cooler than at Shemlân.

Jezzîn is nearly three thousand feet above the Mediterranean, and is higher and farther removed from the warm air of the sea and the plain than that village. We pitched once on this camping-ground with our Ambassador to Constantinople and his family.

How came they to be in this unfrequented part of Lebanon?

They had delayed their tour through the Holy Land until the middle of summer, and while exposed to the heat and malarial influences of the plain of Gennesaret — where, long ago, "Peter's wife's mother lay sick of a fever" — several of the party were prostrated by that dangerous malady.[1] Being informed of their condition by a letter from an Episcopal clergyman then in Naza-

[1] Luke iv. 38.

reth, Dr. Van Dyck and I went to their assistance. We found them at Safed, and the Doctor decided that it was necessary to remove them from that neighborhood, even if they had to be carried. Some of the invalids had so far recovered as to be able to ride, so extemporizing a sort of palanquin for the Ambassador and one for his wife, we were ready to start. The American Vice-consul of Sidon, who had accompanied us, summoned, through the aid of the local authorities, forty fellâhîn to act as porters. As they had never been trained to carry people, sick or well, our progress was exceedingly slow, owing to the many changes amongst the bearers, and very uncomfortable for the invalids.

To avoid the heat on the sea-coast we kept upon the mountains, passing Kedes, the Kedesh of Naphtali, Hûnîn, the Château Neuf of the Crusaders, and Deir Mîmâs. We crossed the Lîtâny below Kŭl'at esh Shŭkêf, Castle Belfort, and ascended the south-western slopes of Lebanon through the shady valley of "the flowery" Zaherâny to Jerjû'a, and thence along Jebel er Rîhân to Jebâ'ah, "the beautiful." We reached this walnut-grove at the end of the fourth day from Safed. The invalids were soon benefited by the change of air, and, greatly enjoying the variety and magnificence of the scenery, were able to continue their journey by way of el Mukhtârah and Deir el Kamar to Abeih. After a few days' rest there, they went down to Beirût, and then took the steamer for Constantinople. Their experience emphasizes the warning to all who intend to travel through this land not to make the tour of Palestine during the hot months of summer.

You have spoken of Jebâ'ah before with special admiration; why is it considered so beautiful a village?

Three things, to the Arab mind, constitute natural beauty—good water, a cool breeze, and abundance of verdure—and Jebâ'ah, owing to its situation and the surrounding mountains, has all of those. Did it fall in with our arrangements for the future prosecution of our travels, the ride around the extreme south-western end of Lebanon would lead us through some of the wildest, well-wooded, and most picturesque scenery in this region.

The distance from here to Jebâ'ah is only about three hours, and before descending to the village the road skirts the grandest

old forest in all Lebanon. Through that dense wood a guide would lead us up to Neby Sâfy, a solitary shrine on the highest pinnacle of Jebel er Rîhân, commanding views of vast extent and great variety. That muzâr is frequented by Metâwileh, and Bedawîn Arabs from the Hûleh and elsewhere. The village of Jebâ'ah, one thousand feet directly below Neby Sâfy, has the best-watered and most verdant fields, vineyards, and gardens in Southern Lebanon. I have spent more than one summer, with my family, in the castle and the village. The ride thence, southward, along the mountain-side, to Jerjû'a and the well-wooded gorge of the Zaherâny, and beyond it to the beautiful plain of Jermŭk, is delightful.

Jerjû'a is about an hour south of Jebâ'ah, and above that village is a conical peak, similar to Neby Sâfy, covered by an oak grove, and crowned with the white dome of a muzâr, called Neby Sîjud. The native Jews of this country occasionally make pilgrimages to that shrine, although it is now the tomb of a Moslem saint. From the village of Jermŭk I once went up and over the wild mountains of Jebel er Rîhân, as the southern end of Lebanon is called, to Kefr Hûneh. For a considerable distance there was no road whatever, and the only inhabitants were the tent-dwelling Bedawîn. Taking two of them as guides, we forced our way for miles through tangled bushes and under low trees, winding upwards as best we could. For the first hour the rock was limestone, but before reaching the squalid hamlet of Rîhân it had given place to amorphous trap. The only thing the people of Rîhân seemed to cultivate was their tobacco, which is celebrated throughout that region, and of that there were large fields all around the village.

Rîhân is the Arabic for myrtle, and both the mountain and the village are rightly named from it; for I never saw elsewhere such masses of flowering myrtle, and the rills in the ravines were bordered with dark-green oleander-bushes, whose flowers, red and white, were in full bloom and in prodigal profusion. For several miles the path was literally covered with bullet-shaped pebbles. They were of all sizes, from a pea to that of an orange, and were perfectly round, but not water-worn. I suppose they are globular iron-ore. We will find them in some other localities, generally in connection with the sandstone formation, and especially where it

lies in contact with amorphous trap-rock. Higher and higher up the mountain-path we ascended, until the entire valley of the Lîtâny, the region around the upper Jordan, Lake Hûleh, and the mountains of Bashan and Gilead beyond, were brought within the ever-widening horizon. That whole region of Lebanon is wild, wooded, and strangely broken up with towering peaks of every shape and size. There are several cones so like the craters of extinct volcanoes that one not aware that they are composed of compact limestone would inevitably be deceived. The summits of some of them are crowned with white-domed muzârs, like that of Neby Sâfy. There is the place to hunt wild-boar, wolves, and panthers, in the tangled bushes and thickets, and through the profound gorges which descend to the Lîtâny, on the south-east. The ride over that part of Lebanon is rarely taken by the traveller; but it is well worth the trouble and fatigue, the scratches and the rents to face, hands, and garments which must be endured in the achievement. It took me seven hours to reach Kefr Hûneh.

We read in Deuteronomy xii. 2, "Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree." May not the origin of those muzârs upon high hills and lonely mountain summits be traced back to the time when the Canaanites occupied these mountains, and performed at such shrines those heathenish abominations so often mentioned in the Bible with utter abhorrence and stern denunciation, and on account of which they were condemned to extermination?

The white domes of the Neby, the Wely, the Muzâr, or the Mukâm are to be seen from one end of this country to the other; and yet no one knows when, by whom, or for what special reason they first became consecrated shrines. Many of them are dedicated to the patriarchs and prophets; a few to Jesus and the apostles; some bear the name of traditionary heroes, and others appear to honor persons, places, and incidents of merely local interest.

Many of these "high places" have probably come down from remote ages, through all the mutations of dynasties and religions, unchanged to the present day. We can believe this the more readily because some of them are now frequented by the oldest com-

munities in the country, and those most opposed to each other—Arabs of the desert, Muhammedans, Metawîleh, Druses, Christians, and even Jews. We may have, therefore, in those "high places under every green tree upon the high mountains and upon the



MUKÂM—SAINT'S TOMB.

hills," not only sites of the very highest antiquity, but existing monuments, with their groves and domes, of man's ancient superstitions; and if that does not add to our veneration, it will greatly increase the interest with which we examine them.

There is one of these "high places," with its groves of venerable oak-trees, on the summit of Lebanon, east of this village of Jezzîn. The top of the mountain is of an oval shape, and the grove was

planted regularly around it. When I stood within that mystic circle of mighty oaks, and looked across the vast plain of Cœlesyria, northward to the temple of Ba'albek, and then southward over the mountains to ancient Tyre, I fancied that it had been a connecting point between the two great temples of Baal and Belus. The first rays of the "God of Day" would glance from the altar in Ba'albek to that high place, and thence into the grand portal of the temple of Belus at Tyre.

August 13th.

The houses in Jezzîn are well-built, and it appears to be a thrifty and prosperous place.

It gives name to a large district, of which it is the centre and the capital. Here are the shops — shoemakers', saddlers', blacksmiths', carpenters', tailors' — and there are the mills for the surrounding villages; and hence the appearance of life and business in and about the village. The inhabitants are also occupied with the care of their vineyards and mulberry-fields, and in the culture of silk. Jezzîn was under the jurisdiction of the Jumblât family of Mukhtârah; and amongst the charges against Sa'îd Beg was one that he caused this village to be burnt during the civil war in 1860. Perhaps he could not prevent it, since the destruction of the place was a great pecuniary loss to him. The inhabitants being all Maronites and Greek Catholics, every house was burnt; and when I visited the place soon after it presented a most melancholy and deserted appearance. But the men were not massacred, as were those in Deir el Kamar; and on the restoration of peace nearly all the families returned, and speedily repaired their dwellings. The population is, probably, as numerous now as it ever was; and, being entirely liberated from Druse dominion, the people are more prosperous and secure than formerly.

As we have a steep ascent to climb, we will water our horses from Jezzîn's noble fountain. Like the one at Bâthir, it is utilized from its very source, and drives those mills below it at the least possible expense. All the luxuriant verdure that clothes the entire valley is also the gift of this never-failing dispenser of fertility and life; and the inhabitants may well be proud of their copious village fountain and their splendid groves of walnut-trees.

Jezzîn is singularly sheltered by these high and rocky cliffs, and the mountain on the east of it rises steeply to a great elevation. The prospect from its summit must be very extensive.

A roughly-hewn pathway winds up that eastern mountain, and leads to a wide plateau, which stretches for several miles to the north-east. It was the favorite hunting-ground, with falcon and pointer, of the Shehâb emîrs, in the days of their power and glory. I once spent a morning rambling over it, in search of ancient remains reported to have been seen there. But, as so often happens, I found such native traditions worthless. There are no ruins of any importance in that entire region.

We have been steadily climbing up the mountain since we left the fountain, and have reached a great height, as is evident not only from the ever-widening prospect, but also from the cool and bracing breeze that is so refreshing to the weary traveller.

It comes from the far west, over the wide expanse of that distant sea, and is the prevailing wind, both in summer and winter, along the entire coast of Syria and Palestine.

Those two peaks towering above us are more than five thousand six hundred feet high, and are visible for a great distance in every direction. They are the twins, or Taumât of Nîha. In a cloudless night they are distinctly seen far out to sea, rising like pyramids against the sky, from the long, dark outline of the Lebanon range, and to the mariner, approaching from the west, they are important landmarks.

We have now reached the highest point on our route to-day; and here the road from Sidon over Lebanon crosses the path and descends eastward to Meshghŭrah. In former times, when Sidon was the seaport most frequented by European ships, this road was the highway upon which merchant caravans travelled between it and Damascus. All that trade and travel, however, has been transferred to Beirût, and this route, once so thronged, is nearly deserted. In another hour we shall reach Kefr Hûneh, the last and most elevated village on the south end of Lebanon, and the limit of our excursion in that direction.

The road to it along the dry bed of this watercourse is about the roughest we have yet ventured upon. Our horses have been

constantly slipping and sliding for the last half hour over the smooth surface of broad rocks lying at every possible angle, and mine has become quite discouraged and dismayed.

Not any more so than his rider, I suppose; but the worst is over, and we will soon see Kefr Hûneh wedged in amongst great blocks of gray limestone, and more than half concealed by them. We need not devote much time to that straggling and unimportant village. As at the hamlet of Rîhân, these large and well-cultivated fields indicate that tobacco is the chief product of the place. There is, or was, a custom-house officer stationed here to collect the mîry, or tax, upon the tobacco grown in this part of Lebanon, and to prevent smuggling. I was here once when there occurred a violent Arab row between that officer and a band of smugglers, who were caught with several loaded mules concealed in the thick woods to the south-west of the village.

These wide-spreading walnut-trees amongst the houses contrast very effectively with the tall and slender poplars bordering the tiny brook which runs eastward through that rocky region.

Following the course of that stream lies our path, for three or four miles, to a lake, nearly circular in shape, about three hundred yards in diameter, and, to all appearances, occupying the mouth of an extinct volcano. There are no indications of volcanic action about it, however, though large masses of trap-rock are seen higher up the mountain-side, to the north-west.

The road from Kefr Hûneh, which has led us on to the lake, descends eastward to the Lîtâny, through a long ravine which becomes more and more precipitous, until near the end the traveller is hurried, nolens volens, down the cliffs to the very bank of the roaring river, half a mile below Jisr Bŭrghŭz. I have frequently crossed the river on that bridge, in going and returning from Hâsbeiya, and always stopped to admire the scenery of the Lîtâny, and to watch the contest of the river with the mountain for a passage through the chasm and on towards the sea. Below the bridge the course of the river is between gigantic mountain cliffs, rising on either side a thousand feet high and more.

At the lake we leave the road from Kefr Hûneh to the Lîtâny, and must now wander over a desolate region, to the north-east,

in search of Meshghŭrah. For much of the distance—nearly two hours—we shall have no road, and may roam at our free will over this lofty plateau. The ride is none the less interesting on that account, and from many points the outlook commands an extended and magnificent prospect over mountain and plain far as the eye can follow southward. Directly to the south-east of us the sublime majesty of Hermon rises heavenward in solemn grandeur, and, though apparently quite near, in reality the gorge of the Lîtâny and the wild regions of the Upper Jordan lie between us.

We have yet a long descent around the base of the southern twin, or Taum of Nîha, to Meshghŭrah, where we are to spend the night; and, as the road is rough and rocky, I prefer to dismount and walk. Our tents are to be pitched just below a ledge of shelving rocks, from beneath which a number of copious fountains gush out. Uniting with other springs equally large, they form a brawling brook, which rushes down eastward into the Lîtâny, watering on its way extensive gardens and well-cultivated fields.

August 13th. Evening.

My evening walk through this straggling place and amongst the mulberry gardens revealed little that could suggest or justify its claim to be one of the oldest villages on Lebanon.

Five centuries ago Meshghŭrah was mentioned and praised in such important geographical works as that of the Emîr Abu el Feda [Abulfeda]; and the inhabitants claim for their village far greater antiquity. Some of the houses certainly have an antique appearance, and may be of almost any age; but there is nothing to distinguish the place from other agricultural villages, except the great extent of the mulberry-gardens which spread far down eastward to the gorge of the Lîtâny. They depend, for their life and extraordinary production, upon the abundant irrigation furnished by the copious fountains of the place. Such fountains, in a position so advantageous, must always have made Meshghŭrah a desirable and valuable possession. Formerly it was an important station on the caravan route between Sidon and Damascus; and what little direct trade and travel there is at present between those two cities still passes through it, and here those coming from Sidon expect to spend their first night.

We are now in a thickly populated and very productive part of this mountain; but all the villages along these south-eastern slopes of Lebanon have been repeatedly destroyed since I first passed through this region. Being inhabited mostly by Maronites, and peculiarly exposed to warlike incursions from the neighboring Druses and those of Wady et Teim and the Haurân, and from the Moslems of the Bŭkâ'a, they suffered greater calamities during the civil wars than many villages in other parts of the country. The Christians from Zahleh and adjacent places repeatedly came down the Bŭkâ'a, and attempted to penetrate into the Shûf and other Druse districts through these valleys and mountain-passes; and in that way those villages were involved in the fiercest and most ruinous conflicts. Each party in turn burnt, plundered, and destroyed as the varying fortunes of the war afforded opportunity.

And now I suppose those villages have all been rebuilt, and have recovered their former prosperity.

As the walls are generally left standing, the houses are easily re-roofed; and the abundance of poplar and other trees furnish unusual facilities for that purpose. The banks of the Lîtâny, and those of the numerous brooks that descend to it, are lined with them; and as the mulberry-trees were not cut down, a few years of active effort was sufficient to restore the villages to their average state of prosperity. But for the last six hundred years at least this part of Lebanon has been the theatre of innumerable tragedies, and the history of the ruling families during that period of confusion and anarchy is written in blood.

Conspiracy, treachery, murder, war—those constitute the staple with which the chronicle is woven throughout. So runs the story of all the Druse and Maronite emîrs, and the mind revolts at the endless repetition of the same crimes. The only mitigating reflection is that, bad as the atrocities committed in our day have been, they certainly are no worse than those of former times, while the condition of the people is rapidly improving. They are increasing in numbers and intelligence; they build better houses; wear better clothes; have more and better food, more schools, more books, and far more personal liberty than during the days of anarchy and oppression. But the old feudal families, especially amongst the

Druses, are sinking hopelessly into the sea of oblivion, and from thence no hand will be outstretched to save them.

August 14th.

We have visited the last village on this south end of Lebanon, and now we will return to Shemlân along a route quite different from the one by which we came.

Where are we to find our tents at the end of this day's ride?

At 'Ain Zahalteh, a village directly above the main source of the river Dâmûr; and, as much of the road is mountainous and difficult, we have taken an early start. There are more ways than one to reach 'Ain Zahalteh. We might turn to the left and follow the path along the base of Taumât Nîha, passing by 'Aithenît, and then, crossing over Lebanon by Thughrat Bâb Mâri'a, descend on the west side to B'aderân, Nîha, and Ma'âsir to Mukhtârah; or we might keep higher up the mountain by taking the road that would lead us to el Bârûk, and thence to 'Ain Zahalteh. As that route, however, would be very rough and fatiguing, with but little of interest along it to repay us for the toil, we will pass down to the Lîtâny, and, crossing over, follow the east bank of the river to Jubb Jenîn, at the lower end of the Bŭkâ'a.

We have been listening for the past half-hour to a sound rising upward from the valley and pervading the quiet morning atmosphere—a sound as of many waters.

It is the eternal anthem of the Lîtâny—"evening, morning, and at noon"—as it glides onwards over the rocks, and sweeps past those stupendous cliffs in the gorge farther to the south. And now the road leads down the steep declivity to the bridge on which we are to cross to the eastern side of the river. It derives its name of Jisr Kŭr'ûn from a village some distance below it. I have often passed over the road below that village, and ascended, along a rocky ravine, the mountain-range called ed Dahar, to the well-preserved ruins of the temple at Telthâtha. They are on the very summit of the Dahar, and it is four hours from there to Hâsbeiya through the long valley of upper Wady et Teim.

One object in selecting this route is to let you see the remarkable collection of geodes between Jisr Kŭr'ûn and Jubb Jenîn, so we will now turn up through the fields on our right. In many places

the entire surface of the ground is covered with them, and they are of all sizes, from that of a marble to a melon, which the larger ones amongst them closely resemble in shape.

How do you account for the presence of these geodes in such great numbers in this locality?

They have been washed out from the hard clay bluffs of the ridge above them on the east. There they are embedded in numbers numberless, and are dislodged and spread over the plain by the winter torrents. I once crossed over those bluffs on my way to Râsheiyet el Wady, at the northern base of Hermon, and was surprised to find the road, for many miles, literally paved with large bowlders of trap-rock. That obtrusion of trap, I suppose, occurred at the time when the range of ed Dahar was thrown up across the southern end of the Bŭkâ'a between Lebanon and Hermon.

This beautiful and fertile plain seems to be nowhere more than two or three miles wide, and appears as flat and level as though once the actual bed of a lake. The river meanders through it from side to side, as if reluctant to leave this peaceful and verdant region.

When buried under deep snow, as it often is, the outlook over this part of Cœlesyria is anything but cheerful. In great winter storms I have seen the plain above Jisr Jubb Jenîn covered with water, and then it becomes an impassable marsh. It has been suggested that the Bŭkâ'a was originally the bed of a lake, and that the upheaval of the range of ed Dahar cut off the connection with the Jordan valley, to which it naturally belonged; and thus the Lîtâny, that now drains the Bŭkâ'a, was forced to find a passage for itself westward, through Lebanon, to the Mediterranean. It is worth while visiting that locality merely to see the contest for the right of way between the river and the mountains.

The banks of the river, as it winds through the plain to the north of us, are marked out by groups of tall silver-leafed poplars, which more than half conceal the villages beyond them, and those on the mountain-slopes above them.

They are all on the west side of the Lîtâny, and are well protected from the winter's storm and cold by the lofty range of Lebanon immediately above them. They have enjoyed peace and comparative safety for the last quarter of a century, and have become

quite prosperous. In Sŭghbîn, and several other villages, there are now Protestant communities and well-conducted schools, to the manifest improvement of the people in every respect.

At the extreme south-east corner of the plain is a village called Kâmid el Lauz, and that it occupies an ancient site seems evident from the extensive quarries along the base of the mountain. Luz was the original name of Beth-el, as appears from Judges i. 22–26, where it is also stated that the man who showed the children of Joseph "the entrance into the city" was allowed to depart in safety: "and the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which is the name thereof unto this day." The Bŭkâ'a, and the region connected with it on the north, was probably in the land of the Hittites, who at one time were sufficiently powerful to engage in battle with the Egyptians. Possibly that village of Kâmid el Lauz may mark the site of the city which the treacherous inhabitant of Beth-el built for himself "and all his family." I have not been able to find the name Luz or Lauz, which has the same significance in Arabic that it has in the Hebrew, attached to any other ancient site in this country.

We will lunch and rest at Jisr Jubb Jenîn yonder, where you see a group of poplar-trees. They will afford us, at least, a partial shade from the hot sun. The bridge takes its name from Jubb Jenîn, that village on our right. It is mostly inhabited by fanatical Moslems, but we have no occasion to pass through it.

We must here cross over, on this bridge of Jubb Jenîn, to the western side of the river, and, as the base of the mountain is not far distant, we shall soon be climbing up the Lebanon, which rises for several thousand feet above this plain of the Bŭkâ'a.

We have again come upon another collection of geodes, but they seem to have all been broken open by former travellers.

They were exactly in the same condition the first time I passed this way, and the idea occurred to me that they were purposely broken, as the interior lining of chalcedony furnished the best specimens of that mineral to be found in this region. Amongst these numberless fragments I have also found specimens of agate, which may have added greater value to them in the estimation of engravers on precious stones in a former age.

As we approach the foot of the mountain I see that the vines in those terraced fields are still loaded with grapes.

Owing to the sheltered position of the vineyards, their exposure to the sun, and the dryness of the air on this side of the mountain, the grapes are allowed to remain on the vines much longer than upon the west or seaward side of Lebanon. This prolongs the grape crop; and the markets of Beirût and Sidon, and those of the principal villages in the neighborhood, are supplied from such localities until late in December. I have even seen vineyards half buried in snow with the grapes still upon the vines.

We must now address ourselves in good earnest to the long and tortuous ascent of Lebanon by the village of Kefareiya, to the top of the mountain range that overlooks the valley of el Bârûk. The climb is a long and fatiguing one; but the ever-widening view —eastward across the plain of Cœlesyria and over the mountains of Anti-Lebanon; northward as far as "the entrance of Hamath;" and southward to Mount Hermon and the Jordan valley — will amply compensate for the toil.

The road, by its ceaseless windings amongst the oak-trees, affords prospects from many projecting spurs over the great plain —with its checkered surface and long, broad belts of fallow land— of ever-varying beauty and great fertility. I notice that the rocks under the oak-trees are saturated with an oily substance, as though a jar of oil had been actually emptied upon them.

The natives will tell you that it is not oil, but menn, or manna. It is caused by an insect that punctures the leaves, and thus the flowing sap produces this distillation which stains the rocks and stones under the trees. I have seen it in many other places, and have been told by persons from the mountains of Armenia that, in certain localities there, it congeals, and is collected by the peasants and used like honey. The manna which the monks of Mount Sinai gather under the tamarisk-trees, and sell to pilgrims, is doubtless produced in the same way. I purchased small skins of it when in the Convent of St. Catherine. It was so nauseous that no other evidence was needed to show that the monkish manna held no possible relation to that "angels' food" which the children of Israel did gather in the wilderness, when God commanded the clouds from



EL ARZ—THE CEDAR.

above, and opened the doors of heaven, and "rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven."[1]

We may rest our tired horses for a while on this high ridge of Lebanon, nearly six thousand feet above the sea. As for myself, I shall dismount and walk down the steep and rough pathway that will lead us to the famous fountains of el Bârûk.

These old trees around us, and most of those on the highest

[1] Psa. lxxviii. 23–25; Exod. xvi. 4–36.

ridges of the mountain extending for several miles to the south, towards the village of el Ma'âsir, are genuine representatives of Lebanon's most ancient groves of cedar. There need be no hesitation in regarding them as the surviving descendants of those forests from whence Hiram's skilled hewers of timber cut down cedar-trees for Solomon to use in building and beautifying the Temple of the Lord at Jerusalem. They have not died out, or been replanted by man, since that distant day, and some of them are amongst the oldest specimens of cedar-trees in this land.

To the Biblical student, and, indeed, to all travellers, it is deeply interesting to find them occupying this position on the mountains, and not far from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

It is not probable that Hiram resorted for cedar-trees to the distant groves at the north end of Lebanon, when the sides of these mountains near his own capital were covered with those noble trees. When wandering through the grove above el Ma'âsir, I felt assured, from the large size and apparent great age of some of the trees, that the sound of the axe of Tyre's sturdy fellers of timber had once echoed amongst them. The crash of falling trees had often startled the oppressive and solemn silence of those lofty mountain ridges, and from there, in all probability, the timber was carried down to the coast, and conveyed by sea in floats to Jaffa, and from thence carried up to Jerusalem.[1]

The descent on this western side of Lebanon is not so steep as that on the eastern side of the mountain, and it has taken us about an hour to reach these fountains of el Bârûk.

They well up from their hidden source in a quiet and unpretending fashion, quite different from the deafening roar of most of the fountains we have seen.

And the waters are the purest of all in the mountains. No sediment of any kind is deposited by them, nor are the pebbles in the least discolored, although these mighty waters have glided over them for unnumbered ages. It was the superior character of this water that induced Sheikh Beshîr Jumblât to construct an aqueduct and convey it to his palace at Mukhtârah. I have spent several days encamped in a grove of walnut-trees, a short distance be-

[1] 1 Kings v. 8–10; 2 Chron. ii. 16.

low the fountains. Most of the trees have been cut down and the timber sold to speculators, but we could still find a pleasant place to camp, had we not directed our muleteers to go on to 'Ain Zahalteh, which is an hour's easy ride farther north.

The sight of our tents pitched near these fountains would have been very gratifying indeed, for the latter part of our ride has been quite wearisome. But this varied and impressive mountain scenery amply repays us for all the fatigue which it has cost to come and see it, and I take my leave of it with great reluctance.

We could easily spend a week here, as I have done myself, encamped under those large walnut-trees, and beside the purling stream of clear cold water that issues from these copious fountains —the head-waters of Nahr el Bârûk—and flows down through that beautiful valley below us on the left. But we shall find scenery at least as magnificent as this at 'Ain Zahalteh, and by going on to that village we will shorten our ride to-morrow nearly two hours.

The houses at el Bârûk, like those in most of the villages on Lebanon, present an attractive appearance — at a distance — and they are quite in keeping with their picturesque surroundings.

El Bârûk, el Fureidîs, on the opposite ridge, and the villages in this neighborhood occupy that part of Southern Lebanon which is inhabited almost entirely by Druses, and they "are situated," says a former traveller, "on some of the wildest positions of Lebanon. Even these villages of el Bârûk seem hung in the clouds, on the verge of precipices, and they have their green belt of pine, poplar, walnut, and other trees, vines and bushes, covering the crags and relieving the desolation of the site. The dwellings are built of limestone, the roofs are flat, the windows are always small; the door is usually in the middle; and the Lebanon homes often resemble the terraces by which they are surrounded. The path by which these villages are approached is a nervous one, and seems to be cut out of the masses of limestone of which the heights are composed."

Speaking of this valley of el Bârûk, or el Fureidîs, along which our road to 'Ain Zahalteh lies, Dr. Anderson, in his geological report, says that it "is one of the most attractive combinations of trees, green fields, and running water in this or any other part of



FOUNTAIN AND VILLAGE OF EL BÂRÛK



Syria, and abounds in natural pictures which make its name of little paradise" [Wady el Fureidîs] "a pardonable exaggeration."[1]

He describes this region, between Wady 'Ain Zahalteh and Wady es Sŭfa, "as marked by variegated sandstones and enlivened by a cheerful vegetation. The pines are strikingly distributed, and many mulberry and fig trees diversify the scene. The streams are made available in driving mills and watering numerous patches of cultivated land, while the iron-stained rocks appear at intervals through the landscape, overhanging it in wild escarpments, or soaring far above it in the shape of turreted and battlemented peaks."[2] There is nothing exaggerated in this description, and he might have added that in a single sandstone cliff all shades of color, from the purest white to jet black, are strangely blended and contrasted.

Our ride is nearly over, for we are not far from 'Ain Zahalteh; and we shall find our tents pitched, and ready for our reception, close to Burj el 'Amâd, in the middle of the village.

And most welcome will they be, for though the scenery through which we have passed to-day was at times sublime, and always interesting, still our ride down, and up, and along these ranges of Lebanon, has been extremely fatiguing.

August 14th. Evening.

As far as I could see, in the dim twilight, as we approached 'Ain Zahalteh, the region to the west and north appeared to be endlessly diversified by profound wadies, lofty peaks, and perpendicular cliffs, on both sides of the stupendous gorge of the river.

The mountains are singularly cut up by the many tributaries of Nahr el Kâdy, as the main branch of the Dâmûr River is called, which, rising in the region south of Jebel el Kenîseh, expand and deepen the natural declivities of Lebanon into many a yawning abyss and frightful chasm, opening out prospects on every side which, for sublimity and grandeur, are rarely surpassed. From the base of the cliff, in the gorge below this village, the copious fountains of Nahr el Kâdy burst out with great force and uproar. A part of the water is conveyed by an aqueduct to Bteddîn to supply the palaces there, and to irrigate the surrounding gardens; a far larger portion is distributed through the fields and gardens

[1] Ex. to the Dead Sea, p. 98. [2] Ex. to the Dead Sea, p. 100.

along both sides of Wady es Sŭfa, but the main volume of the stream rushes down the valley, in many a foaming cascade, on its way to Jisr el Kâdy, and onward to the sea.

That wady abounds in remarkable cliffs of blue argillaceous marl, which are subject to occasional slides and overwhelming avalanches. The Emîr Haidar, in his history of Lebanon, says that nearly one hundred and fifty years ago a projecting terrace at Kefr Nebrakh, about an hour and a half west of 'Ain Zahalteh, which had a small village on it, parted from the main mountain, and plunged into the wady below, carrying houses, gardens, and trees with it in wild confusion. It completely stopped the river for seven days. The emîr relates that one man who was on the sliding mass escaped unhurt, but was ever after a raving maniac. The catastrophe occurred during the life of the historian, and not far from his home, and we may therefore credit his narrative. I have frequently stood on that awful precipice, and gazed upon the débris of the avalanche, at the bottom of the profound river gorge, fifteen hundred feet directly below. Similar land slides occur every winter on Lebanon, but not on so gigantic a scale, or accompanied by circumstances so appalling and tragical.

Such avalanches appear to have been known even in the days of Job, and he refers to them to illustrate the overthrow of man's vain hope and confidence. "Surely," says he, "the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is moved out of his place;" and he connects such appalling catastrophes with the waters which wear the stones, when, as now, they were occasioned by the great rains and torrents of winter.[1]

Burj el 'Amâd is the only remarkable building in 'Ain Zahalteh. It was once the stronghold of Beit el 'Amâd, one of the feudal families of the Druses, but it has, of late, been transformed into a church for the Protestant community of this village. When I first visited this region Sheikh Khŭttâr el 'Amâd, the last of his line, was considered the most daring chieftain and expert swordsman amongst the Druses. His exploits long ago brought him into trouble with the Government, and he was obliged to flee into the Haurân, where he died, and Beit el 'Amâd is now extinct.

[1] Job xiv. 18, 19.

August 15th.

Knowing that we had before us a comparatively short day's journey, I rode out this morning to view the remarkable scenery of the place. I visited a pretty grove of pine-trees growing on the hill-side east of the village, and was surprised to find there, and on the mountain above them, some genuine cedars of Lebanon. Returning to the village, I descended into the river gorge below it, to the base of the cliff, to see the famous fountains of 'Ain Zahalteh, so remarkable even in this land of great fountains, from whence rivers of waters burst forth like an overwhelming flood.

It is worthy of note that the main source of the Dâmûr, here at 'Ain Zahalteh, is so near that of the river Auwaly at el Bârûk. One is puzzled to account for so great an outflow of water from the same mountain-ridge, where rivers are so close together and so nearly on the same level. Where are the vast reservoirs that send forth, summer and winter, such powerful and never-failing streams, and how are they stored in such a narrow mountain-range as this of Southern Lebanon? "Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters?"[1] But no problem is more obscure than that of the origin of fountains in this land.

As there is no direct road through such a wilderness of towering peaks and deep valleys to Shemlân, what route are we to follow to-day, in order to reach that village?

We have a variety of paths from which to choose. The one the muleteers have taken would lead us along the south side of the valley to Kefr Nebrakh, and down to the road from Deir el Kamar to Beirût at Jisr el Kâdy. Another path would conduct us along the north side of the wady to 'Ain Terâz, where the valley unites with that of the Ghâbûn, and thence up that valley to Bhauwârah: both roads are picturesque but difficult. We shall, therefore, ascend the main wady on the right for an hour, and then cross over to the west side of it and pass through Bhamdûn.

The road which you have selected along this ridge is sufficiently execrable, though the surrounding scenery is wild and magnificent.

The sandstone formation at 'Ain Zahalteh, with its invariable pine-groves, continues for a considerable distance northward; and

[1] Job xxxviii. 25.

such formations are often much broken, and cut up by the winter rains into almost impracticable ravines. Not far ahead of us the old road passes along the edge of a cliff, and is so very narrow and dangerous that I am always thankful to get safely over it. A better road has been made across the ridge east of it, which we shall follow, although it is much the longest. We shall then descend into the valley and easily cross over to the other side.

It is always a relief to escape from such zigzag roads, with their ill-constructed steps, like those of a broken stairway.

From this deep valley we might ascend northward to the French carriage-road to Damascus at Ruweiset el Hamrah, and follow it westward to 'Âleih; but I wish to show you the village of Btâthîr, the only remaining homestead of the Druse feudal chiefs which you have not seen. For that purpose we will cross over the high ridge in front of us, from the top of which it can be seen on the opposite face of an almost impassable ravine.

The Druse sheikhs of Beit 'Abd el Melek have their so-called palaces at Btâthîr; but, like the other feudal families on Lebanon, they have fallen from their glory, and lost their former position and power. Their village is the capital of Aklîm el Jurd, the district through which we have been riding since leaving 'Ain Zahalteh. Jurd is the name for a high, cold, and rough region, and is, therefore, eminently appropriate to this district. The sheikhs of Btâthîr can claim the honor of having been the first to introduce factories for the reeling of silk in this region, in connection with a French company. Those establishments are now quite numerous on the Lebanon, and have greatly increased the value of the silk industry throughout the country.

Bhamdûn, through whose vineyards we have been riding for some time, is inhabited chiefly by Christians of the Orthodox Greek Church; and, owing to the friendly relations maintained by them with their neighbors, the sheikhs of Btâthîr, that village has not been either sacked or burnt during all the civil wars that have desolated so large a part of Lebanon. The people are industrious, economical, and prosperous; their houses are large and well-built, and their fields and vineyards are extensive, spreading far up the mountain eastward, and down the steep declivities westward into

the valley of the Ghâbûn. Bhamdûn is celebrated for its grapes and raisins and the excellency of its dibs.

This village was early occupied as a summer retreat by Americans and others from Beirût; but, as it is nearly a thousand feet higher than Shemlân, the night air is often too cool for comfort. Dr. Anderson found the neighborhood very rich in fossils, and a large part of those described and illustrated by him were obtained in this region. An isolated hill, about a mile to the north-east of the village, is remarkable for the extraordinary number of ammonites and other fossils found there.

The descent westward into the Ghâbûn valley is long, and so steep that I always prefer to dismount and walk down the worst parts. The road is strewn, as you see, with fossils of many kinds, and any one who has the curiosity can gather them. We will find the ascent on the opposite side very gradual, and shall follow the road southward high above the wady for an hour, and then turn to the west along a path which has the range of mountains above 'Âlieh on the right, and the valley of the Ghâbûn on the left. That stream flows southward, and joins the Dâmûr at Jisr el Kâdy.

That pretty little hamlet far below us, on the other side of the wady, nestling amongst the rocks, and half concealed in the verdure, is Bhauwârah. The late Colonel Churchill owned it, and resided there for many years. During that time he published a valuable work on Lebanon, its inhabitants, the Shehâb emîrs, the Druse sheikhs, and the civil wars in these mountains.

Leaving Keifûn and Sûk el Ghŭrb on the right, we will cross over the ridge and descend westward to 'Âitâth; and, passing through the small oak-grove just above that village, in half an hour we shall dismount at our own door in Shemlân.

Once more from these commanding heights we look off upon this glorious prospect — the boundless sea, "this great and wide sea. There go the ships;" and there is the city of Beirût, the broad plain, the foot-hills, and the exalted majesty of Lebanon.

> We hail thee in distance, still mountain, that liftest thine head,
> Where the wavelet, that melts as it glistens, from snows everlasting is fed.

VI.

SHEMLÂN TO THE NATURAL BRIDGE.

Summer Resorts on Lebanon.—'Aitâth.—Beit Tulhûk.—Sûk el Ghŭrb.—Ancient Church. —The Sweating Picture.—Convent of St. George.—Monks.—Wady Shahrûr.—Inhabited Tree.—'Aleih.—Tragedies in the Old Palace.—Ibrahîm Pasha.—Tragedy of the Three Brothers.—Decline of Feudal Princes.—Wady Hŭmmâna.—Coal Mine.—Muhammed Aly.—Petrified Pine-cones.—District of el Metn.—The Emîrs of Beit el Lema.—Brummâna.—The Damascus Road.—El Mŭgheîteh.—Snow Blockade.—Jebel Kenîseh.—Summit Level.—Khân Murâd.—Cold Winds and Malignant Fevers.—A Glorious Prospect.—El Bŭkâ'a.—Anti-Lebanon.—Eastern Side of Lebanon.—Shtôra. —The Road to Damascus.—Temple at Mejdel 'Anjar.—Neb'a 'Anjar.—Intermitting Fountain.—Deir el Gŭzâl.—Kŭbb Eliâs.—Mekseh.—Extensive Views over Cœlesyria. —Zahleh.—El Berdûny.—"Vine and Fig-tree."—El Mu'allakah.—Burning of Zahleh.—Prosperity of Zahleh.—Kerak Nûh.—Ascent of Lebanon.—Bituminous Shale.—Globular Iron Ore.—Limestone Pinnacles.—Neb'a Sŭnnîn.—Temples on Lebanon.—Temple near 'Anturah.—Husn Nîha.—Tomb of Noah.—Tomb of Seth.—Origin of Primitive Sanctuaries.—Rock-cut Tombs.—The Druses and their Religion.—Druse Funerals.—Feudal Families of the Druses.—Lex talionis, or Blood Revenge.—Moses and the Hebrews.—Matrimonial Alliances.—Abraham and Jacob.—Betrothal.—Nocturnal Incident.—Bears and Wolves.—Ascent of Sŭnnîn.—Outlook from the Summit of Lebanon.—Sirocco.—Descent of Lebanon.—Druse War-song.—Bringing Grain to the Mill.—Grinding at the Mill.—Baking Bread in the Tannûr.—Native Bread.—The Use of Leven.—The Staff of Life.—Cone-shaped Oven.—City Ovens.—Ovens in the Time of the Hebrews.—Baking upon the Sâj.—Wady Biskinta.—Griffin Vultures.—Eagles.—Pinnacles of Limestone.—Casts of Fossil Shells.—Dr. Anderson's Description of the Fossils of Syria.—Kŭl'at el Fukra.—Tiberius Claudius.—The Temple in the Midst of Rocky Pinnacles Described by Dr. Robinson.—Remains of a Tomb.—Road from the Dog River to the Natural Bridge.—'Ajeltûn.—Fantastic Rock Scenery.—Wady es Salîb.—Canal from Nahr el Leben.—Irrigation.—Sowing Wheat in Autumn.—Neb'a el Leben.—Milk and Honey.—The Natural Bridge.—District of el Kesrawân.—The Maronites.—Feudal Families.—Monastery Bells.

September 1st.

WHAT a bright and pleasant morning at the very outset of our tour through Northern Lebanon!

As the muleteers know their business thoroughly, and are well acquainted with the roads, they may be left to take their own time

and way to Neb'a Sŭnnîn. We, however, will make a long détour from the regular road, to obtain more comprehensive views of the mountains and valleys of the Upper Ghŭrb.

The people of Beirût are greatly favored in having their summer resorts in these villages prettily situated above the plain, the city, and the sea. They are so high that the air and the water are cool and refreshing, and yet near enough to the city so that they can be reached in a few hours.

'Aitâth, through which we have just passed, is a fair specimen, and it is further distinguished as the home of the Druse sheikhs of Beit Tulhûk, one of the families of Lebanon's feudal lords, whose glory has faded, and their palaces are fast crumbling into decay. I have spent several summers in that village, and occupied one of those palaces. Since then a few commodious dwellings have been built, and they are now rented to some of the English and American residents of Beirût. Sûk el Ghŭrb, directly above 'Aitâth, is the more popular resort, especially for the Greeks and Greek Catholics of the city, attracted to it, in the first instance, perhaps, by the reputed sanctity of its ancient church. I remember Sûk el Ghŭrb when there were only half a dozen small, low houses around the old church, and all nearly hidden from view by mulberry terraces. Now, as you observe, it has become a picturesque village, with large houses built upon and above the high rocky ledge which extends quite to the base of the mountain-ridge south of it.

About forty-five years ago I was taken to see an old picture in that church, which was said, in those times of ignorance, to be endowed with miraculous powers. It was called the sweating picture, from a propensity it had of perspiring profusely. The features of the patron saint were so besmirched with the smoke of wax tapers as scarcely to be visible in the dim light of the dark vault. Giving the old priest a small gratuity, he besought the saint, with prayers and exclamations, to perform the miracle, and soon the picture was bedewed with moisture; but my companion, a shrewd native, declared that he saw the priest sprinkle water upon it. The miraculous power of the saint was exhausted long ago, and the dilapidated old church has been replaced by a new edifice.

That long, level terrace of the Convent of Mâr Jirjis esh Shîr.

St. George of the Cliff, just below us, is the favorite promenade of the monks, and there every pleasant evening some of them are always to be seen, apparently engaged in devout meditation, while in reality they are taking a little exercise, and enjoying the cool air and the magnificent prospect.

The entire mountain-side, and this profound valley sinking far down to the plain, present a wide expanse of terraced fields and fruitful gardens, studded here and there with small clusters of houses, which give to it the appearance of one continuous village.

Wady Shahrûr, or el Wady, as it is sometimes called by way of eminence, is one of the most densely populated valleys of Lebanon. Owing to the character of the soil and the abundant supply of water from the numerous fountains, nearly every variety of fruits and vegetables in this country are raised here. The little rills that come tumbling over the cliffs and foaming down the terraces exhaust themselves in the summer season amongst the vineyards, the gardens, and the groves below. During the winter they rush madly down to the plain, and swell the turbid Nahr el Ghudîr into an impassable torrent, sweeping everything before it to the sea.

Some of the English and American residents of Beirût have built houses for themselves amongst the rocks and upon the ledge above us, and more picturesque positions could not be desired for summer residences. This venerable oak, near the edge of the precipice, is one of the "inhabited trees," upon whose branches the natives hang bits of rags torn from their garments—votive offerings to propitiate the mysterious being supposed to frequent them. Such trees are found all over this country, and illustrate the tenacity with which ancient superstitions retain their hold upon the minds of the ignorant and credulous inhabitants.

We are now passing through 'Aleih. This village has of late been greatly improved, and there are at present many large and comfortable houses in it, some of them built by wealthy citizens of Beirût. Many of the foreign consuls have selected this place for their summer residence, and the Governor-general of the Lebanon frequently spends a few weeks here. 'Aleih has the reputation of being very healthy, and is considerably higher and cooler than Shemlân. A branch of Beit Tulhûk resided here; but the

sheikhs have been deprived of their former power by the Turkish government, and the family is now almost extinct.

That rambling old palace on the hill-side recalls a series of tragedies enacted there many years ago. The first summer I spent on Lebanon I lived in a house not far from the palace, which was then occupied by one of the sittât, with her two sons and a cousin of the young sheikhs. The three boys were of about the same age —from twelve to fifteen—bright and intelligent. They visited me often, and I became quite interested in them. The three generally came together, accompanied by their respective guardians; and the cousin was always attended by a servant who carried a silver cup, and would never allow him to drink out of any other. It was feared that the young sheikh would be poisoned at the instigation of his aunt, the mother of the two boys—a princess as beautiful as Delilah, and equally treacherous.

The summer passed quietly away, but a year afterwards the cousin was inveigled into a room in the palace, and there murdered by the two brothers, because he was the heir to most of the property. The country had but recently passed under the nominal control of the Egyptian Government, and Ibrahîm Pasha had marched northward to encounter the army of the Sultân. During that disturbed interregnum every one "did that which was right in his own eyes," as the Hebrews did in those days when there was no king in Israel; so there was no investigation, and no one was punished. But the tragedy did not end in that atrocious murder. The two brothers were engaged one day in cleaning their weapons, when the younger was shot by the elder brother. It was reported that the deed was accidental, but of that there was great doubt amongst the people.

The double murderer, now sole possessor of the entire property of the family, became a leading sheikh amongst the Druses; and when the war broke out, in 1842, between them and the Maronites he took an active part in it. Being accused of outrageous cruelties, he fled to the Haurân; but, after remaining there for some time, he was pardoned by the Turkish authorities and recalled. Etiquette required him to pay his respects to the Pasha in Damascus; and, after being graciously received and dismissed, he started to return

to that palace in 'Aleih, accompanied by some of the sheikhs who had been with him in the Haurân. They never reached Lebanon. The cholera, which was then raging in this country, attacked them, and all died on the road. It was the general belief, however, that they had been poisoned on taking leave of the Pasha at Damascus. The widowed and childless mother married a sheikh of another family, but was soon after divorced and sent away to die, no one knows when or how. Thus ends the sad story of one of the branches of Beit Tulhûk—the first family of Druse sheikhs with whom I became acquainted nearly half a century ago.

The Nemesis of retribution, though delayed, had neither pity nor mercy for such monsters in the guise of men and women.

That dark record is not an isolated chapter in the history of this country. Muhammed Aly, in 1830–'31, sent his warlike son, Ibrahîm Pasha, to wrest Syria from the Sultân; the leading feudal family in Lebanon sided with the Turkish Government, and, in consequence, the male members were obliged to flee to distant parts. In 1840–'41 the Egyptians were driven out of the country by the combined European Powers, and Syria was given back to the Turks. There were then three brothers in that family of Druse sheikhs, and they were raised to their former station, and their property was restored to them. During the ten years of their enforced exile two young sheikhs lower in station had risen to power, and had married the only brides, sisters, within the marriage circle of the family. After the return of the fugitive brothers, the two oldest killed the husbands and married their widows themselves.

Such atrocious villany reaped its swift reward. The eldest brother became imbecile, and sunk into obscurity and poverty. The other usurped all authority, and laid hands upon the entire property; nor could he be induced to allow a decent competency for the support of his elder brother. He became wealthy and powerful; but, owing to his presumable complicity in the massacres at Deir el Kamr in 1860, he was denounced by some of the Commissioners of the European Powers, imprisoned in Beirût by the Turkish authorities, and barely escaped being beheaded. At length, through the earnest intercession of political friends, he was

allowed to leave his prison, but only to die. A few days after his liberation he expired in a house not far from my own.

Great hopes were entertained that the youngest of the brothers, when he came of age, would exert a happy influence upon the people; and he appeared anxious to qualify himself for a life of usefulness, but he soon became insane. The widows had three brothers, the youngest of whom became a raving maniac. The oldest was killed during the civil wars that desolated Lebanon, and the other brother retained just enough wit to manage the property. I was brought into frequent contact with both those families of Druse sheikhs and marriageable princesses, and observed, with painful interest, the dreadful calamities attending their career, and the declining fortunes of their ancestral house.

The feudal lords and ladies of these mountains have indeed been visited with relentless and condign punishment.

For at least a thousand years the native princes on Lebanon and Hermon have been engaged in plots and outbreaks, assassination and murder, and now their families are either extinct, or are rapidly declining, with no prospect of their restoration to power. The country has, however, no cause to regret the dying out of those old families. They blocked the wheels of progress, and their extinction was as necessary as it was inevitable.

We have now reached the carriage road to Damascus, which winds up the slopes of Lebanon above the profound gorge of Nahr Beirût. Let us ride to the edge of the cliff, and look down into the wide and deep valley of Hŭmmâna.

It is impossible to gaze upon scenery so vast and sublime without giving expression to one's great surprise and admiration.

Wady Hŭmmâna is considered one of the finest in Lebanon. It possesses a greater variety of forest scenery than any other valley, interspersed with silk-reeling factories, convents, churches, and picturesque villages. It has also one interesting feature found nowhere else in Syria. Near the bottom of the valley, below Kŭrnâyil, is the only coal-mine in this country. Its existence had been long known, but it was not worked until the Egyptians got possession of these mountains. Muhammed Aly employed an English engineer, in 1834-'35, to superintend the mining operations, and

many hundred tons of coal were taken to Beirût, for the Egyptian steamers. But the coal was of an inferior quality, and so impregnated with sulphur as to corrode the boilers. There was, also, a large proportion of iron pyrites mingled with the coal, and the mounds of that rubbish, thrown out of the mine, became ignited by the autumn rain, and continued to burn for several months.

When the Turkish Government was again established over Syria, mining operations were, of course, abandoned, nor is it probable that they will ever be renewed. Besides the impurity of the mineral, the stratum is not more than two and a half feet thick, and the working of it is rendered difficult and expensive by numerous dislocations and "faults" in the strata. I was surprised to find in the mass of shale overlying the coal numberless fragments of perfectly preserved specimens of petrified pine-cones, in all respects like those which now grow on the pine-forests that crown the sandy ridge above the mine. How they came there, and what they imply or suggest, we may leave to geologists to explain.

Directly below Deir el Kŭl'ah the deep gorge of Nahr Beirût is divided into two branches. The one which descends from Jebel Kenîseh forms this beautiful valley of Hŭmmâna. The other, coming down through the yawning chasms in Jebel Sŭnnîn, drains all the western slopes of that imposing mountain. Between those two profound wadys is the district of el Metn, with its coal-mine, below Kŭrnâyil, its pine-forests, and numerous villages. The Metn is inhabited by a mixed population, Greek, Maronite, and Druse; and each party, in turn, Maronite or Druse, has swept over it during the many civil wars, killing, plundering, and burning, and the marvel is that it recovers so rapidly.

A large part of el Metn has been constantly governed for the last two hundred years by Emîrs of Beit el Lema. They came from Jebel el A'alah, south-west of Aleppo, with a pedigree as long as the tail of a comet, and settled at first in Kefr Selwân. After the usual fortunes and inevitable misfortunes which have befallen every feudal family on these mountains, they became, nominally, Christians, and finally sunk into poverty and obscurity. Some of them still reside in Sulîma, a village on the northern side of the well-wooded ridge, beneath which lie the coal-measures of Leba-

non. Others are living at Brummâna, that village on the top of the mountain, above the Bay of St. George.

Many years ago Brummâna was the favorite summer resort of the Europeans of Beirût, but the water is scarce and not palatable, being slightly impregnated with sulphur from the ferruginous sandstone, which overlies the entire ridge. The village is celebrated for its noble prospects and pleasant rides through pine-forests, and for a group of oak-trees of venerable age and great size, under the dense shade of which I have spent many a pleasant hour.

The gradients on this part of the Damascus road, which leads up almost to the summit of Lebanon, are by no means steep, and the ascent is so gradual as hardly to be perceptible.

A short distance ahead of us the rise is more rapid until the famous pass of el Mŭgheîteh is reached, over five thousand feet above the level of the sea. Before the French engineers opened the way up through that wilderness of rocks and crags, el Mŭgheîteh was a long and dangerous defile, which many fatal accidents to individuals and caravans had rendered notorious. Every winter it was overwhelmed by snow-drifts, and all travel to and from Damascus on that route was suspended. Even this broad and admirably constructed road is often completely blocked, and a channel through the snow has to be made.

I have ridden over the part where we now are when the channel was barely wide enough to permit the diligence to pass. On one occasion the snow on either side was higher than the top of the diligence, and the passage was so narrow that the snow was swept from both sides on to the vehicle. The accumulation of snow is due to the proximity of Jebel Kenîseh, which lifts its head to the clouds, six thousand six hundred feet above sea-level, and directly above el Mŭgheîteh. So steep is the side of that rugged mountain that much of the snow that falls upon it is drifted down into the pass during the great winter storms.

The summit level of the ridge is only about a mile across, and then the road begins to descend eastward towards the Bŭkâ'a—at first gradually, but after passing Khân Murâd its descent is very steep, and the diligence rumbles along with dangerous velocity even around the sharp zigzags, quite down to the plain. We will

stop to rest for an hour at that khân, where the hospitable innkeeper will furnish us with hot coffee after our lunch. It was originally a dilapidated khân, where I have encamped more than once, long before the Damascus road was constructed by the French, but it has been greatly altered to adapt it to the wants of the Company. Wherever it was practicable, the new road followed the line of the ancient highway, and the stations of the Company are also located at or near the old khâns of former days.

This way-side inn is directly below the south-eastern shoulder of Jebel Kenîseh, and, of course, is very cold in winter, and often buried under the deep snow. It is also exposed to violent gales of wind. I once pitched my tent on the roof of the old khân, which was then the only level place about it. But it was not a secure or a comfortable camping-ground. Some time after midnight there came sweeping down from the heights of Jebel Kenîseh a furious gale that nearly carried away my tent; and, though it was midsummer, the wind was extremely cold.

An old sheikh of 'Aitâth explained to me why it was that so many of the men who came from the mountain villages to this part of the Bŭkâ'a at harvest time soon returned, having been attacked with malignant fevers. He said the fever was not caused by malaria, but was entirely due to those cold winds. The harvesters slept on the threshing-floors, and owing to the extreme heat in the first part of the night, they used no covering, and were consequently exposed to the chilling wind that invariably began to blow after midnight. That, I believe, to be the true cause of most of the fevers which abound on Lebanon during the latter part of summer, and all travellers should then protect themselves and their muleteers from the pernicious effects of such cold winds.

We have been descending rapidly since we left Khân Murâd, and now, far below us, the broad expanse of the Bŭkâ'a stretches away to the north, and, passing the ruins of Ba'albek, is lost to sight at "the entrance of Hamath." Across the plain, southward, is Hermon, and opposite to us is Anti-Lebanon; while Lebanon, that goodly mountain, rises above us to the clouds.

This is indeed a glorious and comprehensive prospect.

Instead of hurrying, like the diligence, down the ever-winding

road to the plain, we will take our stand on that high bluff north of us, and survey the splendid outlook which it affords. It was mainly to show you this magnificent and suggestive view that we have made this détour from the regular route.

Hermon seems to dominate the entire southern portion of the Bŭkâ'a; but the long, irregular range of Anti-Lebanon, which walls in the eastern side of the plain, appears to be much lower even than our present stand-point on these western mountains.

It is in reality lower than the Lebanon range, and yet I have ascended some peaks east of Ba'albek and above the plain of Zebedâny which are six or seven thousand feet high.

The Bŭkâ'a now seems to be surprisingly near, and outspread almost at our very feet, like a great carpet of diverse patterns.

This eastern side of Lebanon is entirely different from the western. There are none of those long reaches of nearly level ground by which the summit is easily gained, but the mountain drops abruptly to the plain, almost without a break; and the diligence, which takes six hours to reach this point from Beirût, descends swiftly down to Shtôra, the half-way station to Damascus, in thirty minutes. From Shtôra travellers often take a carriage or hire horses, and make a hasty visit to Ba'albek, which is six hours distant from that station.

One can follow the line of this carriage-road to Damascus quite across the plain to the other side, until it passes behind that low ridge which extends far away to the south-east.

From Mejdel 'Anjar, on the eastern side of that ridge, it ascends, by easy grades, the long Wady Harîr, to the level but stony Sahil Judeideh, and thence passes into Wady el Kŭrn, which it follows towards ed Dîmâs, a large village on the western border of a rocky and dreary plateau, called es Sahra, that extends eastward to the banks of the Barada. The road crosses that desert of ed Dîmâs, and winds along the left bank of the lively and beautiful river of Damascus, overshadowed by tall trees of various kinds, and then passes out upon the plain between luxurious gardens, and through the verdant Merj to the gates of the city.

With your glass you can see the walls of an ancient temple, standing on the northern end of the hill which hides Mejdel 'Anjar

from view. That temple was well built, like those upon Hermon, and there are some enormous stones in the eastern and western walls, twenty-one feet long and nearly six feet high. There are no inscriptions, and it has no name or historic association, except that, directly below it, on the north-east, are the extensive ruins of 'Anjar—towers, walls, columns, and other remains—supposed to mark the site of Chalcis, the capital of a small province ruled by the Ptolemies and the Herods. The temple may have been built in the first century by Herod Agrippa II., mentioned in the Acts, in honor of the Emperor Claudius.[1]

About half a mile north-east of those ruins is Neb'a 'Anjar, the main permanent source of the river Lîtâny. There are several large fountains much farther north, on both sides of the plain, such as those of the stream that passes down from Sŭnnîn through Zahleh, and at Râs el 'Ain, near Ba'albek; but during the summer the water from them is exhausted by irrigation. The stream from Neb'a 'Anjar always forms a deep river, which cannot generally be crossed except at the bridge. It has, in fact, several sources, but the main one is an intermitting fountain. Sometimes the quantity of water from it is quite small, and at other times it is largely increased. I was there once when the overflow was so great as to endanger the mill-dam below it. Somewhat similar phenomena occur at Fauwâr ed Deir, the Sabbatical river, north of Tripoli, mentioned by Josephus and Pliny.

Upon a low ridge opposite us, on the eastern side of the Bŭkâ'a, is a place called Deir el Ghŭzâl, the convent of the gazelle, where there was an ancient temple, the remains of which are still to be seen on the hill-side and in the valley below. On some low cliffs south of it are a few words of a Greek inscription, but they impart no valuable information. There is a much longer inscription in a village farther north which I once copied when passing along that side of the plain from Ba'albek to Neb'a Anjar.

What is the name of that ruined castle upon the high crag on the side of that ravine to the south of us?

It is called Kŭbb Eliâs, and there is a village below it of the same name. Fakhr ed Dîn, the celebrated Druse emîr, is said to

[1] Acts xxv. 26.

have built it; but it was dismantled long ago, and there is nothing about it of much interest or to indicate its age. It was probably constructed to command the ascent over Lebanon, and for the protection of caravans, merchants, and travellers.

It is time to continue our ride. We will get a guide at Mekseh, the next station ahead of us; and, keeping along the mountain above the extensive vineyards of Zahleh, we will climb to Neb'a Sŭnnîn, near the summit of Lebanon west of that village.

How magnificent are the views over the great plain and the surrounding mountains! From every projecting ridge the prospect is different, but always impressive and beautiful.

We obtain, from some points, a perfect view of the whole of Cœlesyria; for although that name came, ultimately, to have a far wider application, the Bŭkâ'a is the original Cœlesyria, or hollow Syria of ancient history and geography. We are to pass through the northern part of it hereafter, and will become more familiar with it, and with the names of many villages scattered over this fertile plain. From that prominent ledge of rocks to which we are coming we will obtain an excellent view of Zahleh, the most populous and prosperous town on Lebanon.

It is a much larger place than I expected to see, and its situation has been well chosen, and is exceedingly picturesque.

There is nothing resembling it on these mountains. The town occupies both sides of the valley, which widens as it deepens, and finally opens out upon the plain to the south-east. Through the middle of the valley flows the sparkling little river of el Berdûny, which descends from the south-eastern end of Jebel Sŭnnîn; and, after contributing to the wants of the town, its life-giving waters are distributed over a wide area of vineyards, gardens, and cultivated fields on the plain of el Bŭkâ'a below. Along the banks, through the town, and elsewhere grow hundreds of tall and graceful silver-leaved poplars, which add much to the attractiveness of the place and the beauty of the scene. The houses are built upon the sloping declivities on both sides of the river, and rise, tier above tier, far up the steep side of the mountain.

There are several churches in the town, including one recently erected by the Protestant community. Excellent schools, both for

boys and girls, have been established, and are flourishing remarkably. The desire for education has extended to the surrounding country, and schools have been opened in many of the villages.

The Rev. Gerald F. Dale gives a graphic description of the scenes and scenery in this neighborhood, and the manners and customs of the inhabitants at the present day:

"The Zahleh people are now in the vineyards. We went yesterday to Furzul to hold the usual service, and during the hour's ride were surrounded with vineyards before us, behind us, and upon either side of us. The road wound over the low spurs of the mountain, which were carefully cultivated, and beautifully terraced all the way down to the fertile plain of Cœlesyria. The ruins of Ba'albec were in sight to the north, and toward the south Mount Hermon was towering above everything. Men, and women, and children, horses, donkeys, camels, and mules, were going and coming with baskets or boxes or saddle-bags of grapes. Each person in passing politely invited us to help ourselves [from the tempting baskets], and some would take no denial.

"We sold two pocket Testaments for twenty pounds of grapes, the grapes to be delivered at any time during the present week. We scattered mission papers where we thought that they would be read and appreciated, and turned aside for a talk with one of our church members whose vineyard was by the roadside. In two different places companies of people were treading out the juice of the grapes to make grape molasses. In all directions people were making raisins, and some were preparing the ripe fruit to be sent to the neighboring villages for sale. Here and there, upon a terrace, was a fig-tree, and we thought of the time in America when we read and wondered at the words 'They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree.'"

Vineyards and vines, treading out the juice of the grapes, and here and there a man sitting "under his vine and under his fig-tree" are subjects eminently Biblical; and here on the spot we certainly can testify with Mr. Dale that "this land is a grand commentary upon the Bible."[1]

Although Zahleh does not command so magnificent an outlook

[1] 1 Kings iv. 25; Micah iv. 4; Zech. iii. 10.

ZAHLEH



as Deir el Kamar, nor is the scenery around and about it so wild and romantic, yet it appears to be almost twice as large. What is the supposed number of its inhabitants?

Including el Mu'allakah, "the suspended"—a mere annex to the town, and almost exclusively Moslem—the population is over thirteen thousand—all Christian, principally of the Greek, Catholic, and Maronite sects—and it is steadily increasing.

No one looking down upon Zahleh from our stand-point would imagine that every house in the place was burnt during the last civil war, and yet such was the fact. By a combined attack of the Druses this town was captured, plundered, and burnt. The inhabitants, however, escaped; and, being particularly energetic and enterprising, they speedily repaired and re-roofed their dwellings, and during the last twenty years of peace they have more than regained their former prosperity. They not only manufacture the articles needed by the numerous peasantry around Zahleh, but also deal largely with places at a distance, and with the Bedawîn tribes of the eastern desert. Some of the merchants have become comparatively wealthy, and live in commodious houses.

About a mile north of el Mu'allakah is the small hamlet of Kerak Nûh, where is shown the reputed tomb of Noah, of which I will give you an account in the evening. At present we must commence the last steep ascent of Lebanon, at the top of which we will be obliged to quicken our pace to reach the tents at Neb'a Sŭnnîn before it becomes too dark to see the way.

Between this point which we have now attained, on the summit of the ridge, and Kŭrnâyil is a locality of bituminous shale, near the village of Kefr Selwân. The shale crops out in many places, and in some parts it is arranged in laminæ not thicker than brown paper. Indeed, my attention was first attracted to it by its fluttering in the wind like the leaves of an open book. Thrown into the fire, that bituminous shale burns with a bright flame, but it has a sulphurous smell, and leaves a hard, stony residuum. Nor is this the only mineralogical product met with in that region.

The ridge between Jebel Kenîseh and Sŭnnîn is sandstone, and the surface is covered in many places with small rounded pebbles like bullets and balls of various sizes, coated over with iron rust

and sand. They are called globular iron ore, and resemble those found in such quantities on the south-eastern side of Jebel er Rihân. Those curious globules are generally found arranged in concentric layers, as if formed by accretion, around a solid nucleus. But by what agency they were formed there, on that sandy ridge of Lebanon, is a problem not easily solved.

Another problem is equally puzzling. Our path from here on to Neb'a Sŭnnîn is entangled in a wilderness of sharp limestone pinnacles — needles, obelisks, shafts, and spires — some of them of colossal proportions, and looking as if driven up from below through the sandstone during the long ages of the past.

Was this singular rocky formation always thus, or has the sand drifted in upon and nearly buried these jagged pinnacles?

They have doubtless been worn into such grotesque shapes by the action of weather, water, and time, but from whence came the sand here upon the summit of the Lebanon range? In fact, the geological problem presented by the sandstone formations on these mountains remains still unsolved.

We seem to have risen quite above the range of human habitations, and this is a wild and desolate region.

Our ride for to-day is nearly over, for beyond this rough ravine into which we have descended we will find the tents pitched and comfortably arranged for our reception, and dinner awaiting us.

Neb'a Sŭnnîn is a fountain of no great size, but the water is clear as crystal and icy cold, and the air is delightfully cool and bracing. There is a weird influence about this oasis in a wilderness of mountains—neither khân nor hut, not even a sheepfold near—shut out from the world below, shut in with the stars above.

This is the only suitable camping-ground for many a weary mile along the road we are now travelling. I have spent more than one night encamped upon the greensward below the fountain. Sŭnnîn towers above it to the north-east for over three thousand feet, and here we are nearly twice that height above the sea. To any one who proposes to climb to the top of Lebanon, there is no better place to spend the previous night than this Neb'a Sŭnnîn; for the ascent to that lofty summit and the return from it will require an entire day.

Neb'a Sŭnnîn, September 1st. Evening.

During our long ride we passed no ancient ruins, no prostrate temples, no forsaken altars; and yet it seems almost impossible that man could dwell in the midst of such august scenery without being inspired with religious thoughts and emotions, prompting him to give expression to them in the erection of such edifices. How do you account for their absence from this part of Lebanon?

Partly by qualifying your statement, and in part by the consideration that the inhabitants of this western side of the mountain were near the cities on the seaboard, and they would naturally perform their religious ceremonies, such as they were, in the grander temples and more celebrated shrines of the neighboring cities. But your remark is not in strict accordance with the facts in regard to this region. Not to mention the remains of the temple at Deir el Kul'ah, there are others quite worthy of attention. In the valley of the north-eastern branch of Nahr Beirût, which comes up here almost to our tent door, are the ruins of a large temple, near 'Antûrah, not the Maronite village in Kesrawân, but one of the same name belonging to this district of el Metn. It was one of the most ancient sanctuaries on these mountains, too old for inscriptions, and was built of large stones, but without much architectural ornamentation, and what remains consists mainly of broken buttresses and masses of shapeless rubbish.

East of our camping-ground, on the other side of the mountains, in the neighborhood of Nîha, there are the remains of two ancient temples. The one near the village has been so thoroughly demolished, and the materials carried away, that neither its dimensions nor its architectural character can now be distinguished. A ravine leads up westward from Nîha into the mountain, for half an hour, to a small plain, upon which is the other temple, called Husn Nîha. It stood on a wide platform, facing the east, and had a portico in front, with a flight of steps leading up to it, more than thirty feet broad, and still in good preservation. The walls were built chiefly of small stones, although a few are ten or twelve feet long, and well squared. The temple was nearly one hundred feet long, and over forty feet wide, but the interior is much choked up with fallen stones and broken columns. The columns are not large,

and appear to have had capitals of the Ionic order, as had also the pilasters, along the walls, on each side of the naos, but the workmanship is inferior to that of most temples, either on Lebanon or Hermon. On the east, south, and west are extensive remains of substantial buildings, whose object it is impossible to ascertain.

At Kerak Nûh, north of Zahleh, there was, probably, a heathen shrine, as there is now a Moslem mukâm over the reputed tomb of Noah. When I first visited it, many years ago, the grave was covered with a ragged cotton cloth of faded green; and the old sheikh informed me, with the utmost simplicity, that the patriarch was so tall that, when they came to lay him in his sepulchre, one hundred and thirty-two feet long, they were obliged to sink a deep shaft, into which his legs, from the knee downwards, were deposited. It is a curious fact that native tradition has transferred to the Bŭkâ'a more than one Biblical celebrity. Directly across the plain from Kerak Nûh, on a spur of the lower range of Anti-Lebanon, is the wely of Neby Shît—the tomb of the prophet Seth—but it is only fifty-five feet long. It is kept in better condition and regarded with greater reverence than that of Noah, and is frequented by Metâwileh as well as Moslems.

How could men be brought to believe, without evidence, that Noah was buried at Kerak Nûh and Seth at Neby Shît?

Or that one was one hundred and fifty feet high, and the other under sixty, with other equally absurd traditions? The conclusion is that the origin of such primitive and fabulous sanctuaries dates far back into the twilight of man's history. Jew and Persian, Greek and Roman, Christian and Moslem, have each in turn found those shrines already venerated, and have adapted them to their own peculiar superstitions. They owe their origin, however, not to any of them, but to the races settled in this land after the great deluge, in the days of Noah himself. Besides ancient temples and venerated shrines, these magnificent mountains contain other traces of man's presence and handiwork in remote antiquity. Numerous rock-cut tombs are found near almost every village, and in many lonely localities they are the only witness that human habitations ever existed there. Those tombs were of various shapes and sizes, and are, doubtless, extremely ancient. We

have seen specimens of most of them in Galilee and Phœnicia, as well as in Southern Lebanon.

As we shall not again pass through the part of Lebanon occupied by the Druses, I should like to learn something more definite about their history, character, and religion. We have found them in nearly every village, and have been invariably treated by them with the greatest respect and kindness.

Their places of worship are low, isolated buildings, called khŭlwât, or solitudes, generally situated on lonely summits of the mountains, but in no other respects differing in appearance from ordinary dwellings. There is nothing in and about those khŭlwât to throw any light upon the Druse religion, and they carefully avoid the subject when introduced. Though residing for many years amongst the Druses, and on terms of cordial acquaintance with many of their principal men, I could never obtain from them much reliable information. They affect to keep their religion an inviolable secret; but this is now quite absurd, since their sacred books have been studied with entire success by De Sacy and other foreigners, and even by many natives of this country. During their wars with the Egyptian Government, soon after I came to Syria, their most sacred khŭlwât were plundered, and their books were seized and distributed to various European libraries, or sold to the curious in this and other countries. Their religious doctrines have thus become known, and their origin and history clearly revealed.

Early in the eleventh century a certain Persian, called Muhammed Ibn Isma'îl ed Dŭrazy, began to proclaim the divinity of El Hakem li Amr Allah, the Caliph of Egypt, maintaining that he was the last incarnation of the Deity. Dŭrazy was mobbed in a mosk at Cairo while reading an argument to establish his doctrine, and some say he was killed in the fray, others that he escaped and was sent by El Hakem to Wady et Teim, where he successfully published his system, and made many proselytes amongst the tribes who occupied the valley between Hermon and the south end of Lebanon. From ed Dŭrazy, no doubt, this sect derived the name by which they are now commonly known. It is, however, a nickname, which they repudiate and dislike. They claim to be strict Unitarians, and call themselves el Mûwahhedin, which has that sig-

nification. Their religious system was formulated, not by Dŭrazy, but by Hamzeh Ibn Ahmed, also a Persian, whom they style el Hâdy, or the Guide. He composed most of their sacred books, and is, therefore, their real religious prophet. He supplanted Dŭrazy, and the Druses disclaim all connection with him.

By what means Dŭrazy or Hamzeh, one or both, contrived to propagate their doctrines and gain proselytes is not known, but tradition says that they were aided by supplies of money sent to them by their insane divinity, el Hakem. Such arguments have always been successful in this country, and are so still; but all we know with certainty is that a considerable body of fanatical converts was organized into a compact, secret, and resolute society which has lived on through numberless social convulsions and civil wars for nearly a thousand years. They gradually spread over Southern Lebanon, Hermon, and into the Haurân, to Jebel el A'alah, above Antioch, and to Mount Carmel and the mountains east of Acre, while a few thousands have settled in Damascus, Beirût, and other towns. They are, however, not a large sect, the highest estimate being one hundred thousand souls. In any case their power and influence in this country are due, not to their numbers, but partly to their geographical location, and still more to their indomitable courage and admirable organization. This compact and available organization has been established and perpetuated mainly by two separate agencies, one religious, the other secular, but which, in times of danger, act in perfect concert and with surprising success. The religious and "initiated" sheikhs, on necessary occasions, can and do summon the entire community to rally round the standards of their feudal lords, and the Druse nation then acts as one man against the common enemy.

In brief, the religious doctrines of the Druses appear to have been derived mainly from the teachings of various sects of nominal Moslems in Persia, Egypt, and the East, grouped together by Muhammedan writers under the general name of Bâtenîyeh. They were mystics, who gave an allegorical interpretation to much of the Korân, and were persecuted as heretics by the orthodox. The most celebrated of these schismatics were the Carmathians, who were with great difficulty subdued by the Caliphs of Bagdad.

The doctrines of that sect, however, survived the extinction of their political organization, and, mixed up with speculations and dogmas still more ancient, derived from Zoroaster, the Gnostics, and other Oriental philosophers, constitute the strange medley of mystical opinions found in the six or seven sacred books of the Druses. Their idea of God differs from that of Islâm mainly in the exaggeration of the doctrine of the Divine Unity. Though they hesitate to ascribe any distinct attributes to the Deity, they maintain that He has often assumed a human form, but more in semblance than in reality. The most remarkable of those divine manifestations and Ministers of Truth are the following: Adam, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammed, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Muhammed Ibn Isma'îl, Sa'îd el Mûhdi, and el Hakem li Amr Allah, who was the last of them all.

A strange group of incarnations, certainly. But if the Druses believe that Jesus was one of the divine manifestations, how do they regard him and his Gospel?

They have two Christs, one divine, the other the son of Joseph. The latter was one of the Ministers of Truth; he was crucified, while the former escaped. It would be a wearisome and profitless waste of time to detail the wild and utterly baseless stories which the Druse disciple is taught to believe on this and kindred matters. The only other doctrine of the Druses which is of sufficient interest to deserve special attention is that of the transmigration of souls. This they maintain openly, and apparently from real conviction. They do not admit that the souls of wicked persons pass into the bodies of brutes, as a punishment for their sins, as do the Nusairîyeh and some other sects. Still, it is their opinion that transmigrations, from one human body to another, and from one state or condition to a different one, better or worse, has in it the elements of retribution. The metempsychosis, you are aware, has been taught, in one form or another, from remote antiquity. It is owing to a belief prevailing amongst the Druses that the Chinese hold this and some other of their dogmas, that they regard them as brethren, and expect, at some future time, a mighty army from that country to come to their aid, by which the whole world will be subdued or converted to their creed.

The entire Druse community, both male and female, is divided into 'Akkâl and Juhhal, initiated and uninitiated. The great body of the nation belong to the latter class, and cannot be said to have any religion. They have no professed creed, observe no religious ceremonies, and never attend the assemblies of the 'Akkâl in their Khŭlwât. The initiated, besides their peculiar dress, are distinguished by a greater dignity and sobriety of demeanor, and are bound by numerous restrictions from which the Juhhal are entirely free. They do not accept office, hold it unlawful to indulge in smoking and such luxuries as coffee, and abstain from all intoxicating drinks. There are many things regarded by them as "forbidden," usury, for example, and they believe the money of the Government to be polluted. Many of the women are 'Akkâl, and meet with the men in the Khŭlwât. The female 'Akkâl are much respected, and when I came to Syria were about the only women who were able to read and write. In their domestic relations the Druses partly conform to the Moslem regulations, but polygamy is not practised amongst them. Divorce, however, is so easy and so common, that the advantages of monogamy are lost. They can literally "put away their wives for any cause," or for none whatever but the whim of the moment. This introduces great irregularity and confusion in their family relations. Without giving credence to the reports of their enemies on these subjects, we shall do them no injustice by admitting that their matrimonial and domestic matters need greatly to be reformed.

The Druses are agriculturists; at least, none of them follow mechanical occupations, and very few engage in trade or are shopkeepers. Though not specially industrious, they are extremely simple and frugal in their habits, and contrive to live on very small incomes. In their ordinary intercourse they are polite and ceremonious to a proverb, even in little things. Etiquette obliges them to be most punctilious in showing the greatest respect to their friends on all private and public occasions — social visits, births, marriages, and deaths. No sooner does a Druse die than his acquaintances, male and female, are seen hurrying from all quarters to the funeral. The most frequent and the largest gatherings on Lebanon are at funerals, and in times of danger or contem-

plated war such occasions are availed of for political purposes, and many an uprising has been matured at these gatherings. Perhaps the worst feature in their character is religious hypocrisy. They curse Muhammed in their secret meetings, and yet join in the Moslem forms of worship when residing amongst them. They will, in a word, conform to the faith of the strongest, whatever it may be; and hence it is almost impossible to accept with confidence their professed conversion to Christianity. There are a few, however, amongst them who have become sincere Christians.

There are, or have been, nine chief historical families of feudal princes, emîrs, and sheikhs. Several of them are now extinct, such as the Tannûch emîrs and those of Beit Ma'ân. In Lebanon there only remain at present the emîrs of er Reslân and the sheikhs of Beit Jumblât, of 'Ammâd, of Abu Năkad, of Tulhûk, and of Abd el Melek. All these feudal families are rapidly declining in wealth, power, and influence. During the wars and commotions of the present century several other families have risen into importance, especially in the Haurân, whither large numbers of Druses have emigrated from Lebanon. The emîrs of er Reslân reside in the lower, and the Tulhûk sheikhs in the upper, Ghŭrb; the Abd el Melek in the Jurd; the Nakadîyeh in and around 'Abeih and Deir el Kamar; and the 'Ammâds east of that village. The large district of esh Shûf is the home of the Jumblâts, whose palace is at Mukhtârah. Theirs is by far the wealthiest and most influential family amongst the Druses, and Sheikh Beshîr was their most celebrated hero, at least in modern times. Indeed, the only other chief that achieved historic celebrity amongst them was the Emîr Fakhr ed Dîn Ma'ân, who lived nearly three hundred years ago, and played an important part in the wars of his times. He conquered a large part of this country, and for many years set at defiance the power and intrigues of the Turkish Government.

The Druses have the reputation of being particularly stern and remorseless in the execution of the old law of blood revenge.

The lex talionis is in force, not only amongst the Druses, but with all the non-Christian tribes who inhabit the mountains at the head of the Mediterranean, and also amongst the Bedawîn who roam over the surrounding deserts. Alliances are made between

families and tribes, near and far away, for the sake of mutual protection, and to enable the contracting parties to retaliate injuries to life and property. By these compacts the parties are bound to stand by each other in case of need, to join in all quarrels, shelter each other when fleeing from the law or from the pursuit of enemies, and to bear their proportion of the fine incurred by any violation of property or injury to person. Especially must they aid in cases of manslaughter or murder; in the first instance, to conceal and further the escape of the slayer, and then to stand by his family to prevent a general massacre by the enraged relatives of the slain; and, finally, they must do all in their power to bring about a compromise, by inducing the other party to accept a ransom for the blood shed and abandon their right of revenge.

It is one of the cruel features of this lex talionis that, if the murderer cannot be reached, the avengers of blood have a right to kill any member of his family, then any relation, no matter how remote, and, finally, any one of the blood confederation. I knew of a case where a Christian had killed a Mutawâly of 'Ain Ibel; and, as the Metâwileh are far the most numerous in that region, and delight to get an opportunity to assault the Christians, the whole village was immediately deserted, the terrified people seeking shelter and concealment amongst their confederates, wherever they could find them. Even on Lebanon, which the Allied Powers have undertaken to look after, I have known, not one, but many horrible tragedies. Several of my acquaintances have literally been cut to pieces by the infuriated avengers of blood, and in some instances those poor victims were not implicated in the murder, and had only a remote connection with the families involved. Were it not for these confederations there would be no safety in such emergencies, and they do actually furnish an important check to the murderous designs of "avengers."

I once inquired of a guide if he were not afraid to go into a certain neighborhood where a murder had been committed by one of his confederation. "Oh no," he replied; "our 'aileh can number twelve hundred guns, and our enemies dare not touch me; and, besides, the matter is to be made up by our paying a ransom." That is the ordinary mode of settling those sanguinary affairs.

Such compacts, with all their consequences, are extra-judicial, are ignored by the law of the land, and opposed to it. Their actual object seems to be to render the execution of the law impossible. But as in the Hebrew community in the time of Moses, so here, the custom of blood revenge is too deeply rooted to be under the control of the feudal lords of the land; indeed, they themselves and their families are bound by it in its sternest demands. It is plain that Moses, clothed with all the influence and power of an inspired law-giver, could not eradicate this dreadful custom, and was commissioned to mitigate its horrors by establishing cities of refuge, under certain humane regulations, which are fully detailed in Numbers and Deuteronomy.[1] In process of time other places besides those six cities of refuge acquired the character of sanctuaries, to which persons could flee; and they were established, sanctioned, and sustained by necessity.

But we must remember that both law and custom have abolished all sanctuaries. There is now neither city nor shrine whose sanctity affords a refuge to one fleeing for his life, and yet the law of retaliation remains, and is executed with energy by the non-Christian tribes, who are in the majority. And those compacts, offensive and defensive, are intended to answer the same purpose that the ancient sanctuaries and cities of refuge did, and they do it. When a man fleeing for life arrives amongst his allies, he is safe, so far as their utmost power to defend him can go, and they are to pass him on to more distant retreats if necessary. For this purpose those compacts and family alliances are extended all over the land, from Dan to Beersheba, and thither the refugees are sent with the utmost despatch and secrecy.

Old Emîr Beshîr succeeded, after a few terrible examples, in putting an end to the custom of blood revenge on Lebanon. But many a Druse wove his smothered vengeance into his unshaven beard, and waited his opportunity during the long reign of that energetic prince. And this is the reason why his downfall, in 1840, by the action of the Allied Powers, was followed by so many shocking tragedies. Long outstanding accounts were immediately referred to a bloody arbitration and settled in death.

[1] Numb. xxxv.; Deut. xix.

The introduction of a higher and more perfect development of Christianity amongst Oriental sects has to encounter and overcome many other obstacles from customs adverse to its nature, which are at least as ancient as history. They have stiffened by old age into elements of unyielding resistance; and yet the reception of the Gospel must abolish or greatly modify even those which have struck their roots down to the very heart of society.

In addition to those confederations devised for external protection, there is the system of matrimonial alliances which prevails amongst all non-Christian sects in this country. There are certain family circles, called mejawîse, within which alone such alliances are permitted. They mutually give and take, and outside of those they must neither marry nor give in marriage. Treaty stipulations, such as Hamor and Shechem wished to establish between their people and the family of Jacob, are still considered matters of importance; and long negotiations are often necessary before the difficult and delicate compact can be accomplished. The readiness with which the people of Shechem consented to the hard condition imposed by the treacherous sons of Israel proves that their alliance was considered an honor and a benefit.[1]

There are also one-sided mejawîse, in which, from necessity, a family consents to take, in order to get wives for their sons, but refuses to give, from an aristocratic feeling of superiority. Many of those matrimonial circles are extremely narrow, and seem to have for their main object the preservation of property within the immediate family. The same purpose lay at the bottom of many Mosaic institutions, or original customs which he sanctioned. But it now acts badly, tends directly to deterioration of the race, and ends in insanity and extinction. I have known instances where there was not a single disposable bride within the entire circle of mejawîse. This often leads to murder between contending candidates for a wife, oftener still to the marriage of mere children to very old men. The difficulty is sometimes got over by purchasing Georgian girls in the Constantinople market. The Gospel must, of course, abolish that traffic; but at the same time it will open the way for marriages on better principles.

[1] Gen. xxxiv. 8–12.

It will also abolish the very ancient system of marrying only relations. This custom prevailed in the family of Abraham even before he left Mesopotamia; and the reason assigned by Laban for giving his daughter to Jacob—because he was a relative—is still held to be binding. If there are two claimants for the same bride, and one is a relation, that is admitted to be a valid plea in his favor. But this also is attended with all the objections already mentioned, and causes many unnatural and compulsory marriages, with their subsequent bad consequences.

The Gospel will, likewise, bring about an entire change in the mode of conducting matrimonial negotiations. They have always been managed in these countries by others than those most interested in the result. The parents—or the elder brother, if there are no parents—make the bargain, and the poor bride has nothing to do but to submit. Her preferences and dislikes are treated with utter disregard, and I have known fatal catastrophes to arise from that cause. Under the ameliorating agency of the Gospel, the material veil of Oriental seclusion will give place to the veil of genuine modesty and self-respect, for which that has been in all ages but a miserable compensation. True religion will educate and elevate the females, and introduce them into society, where they will have opportunities to become acquainted with those who seek them in marriage; and they will not be married off while mere children to those they do not know, or, knowing, dislike.

The Gospel will also greatly narrow the list of prohibited degrees of relationship. That established by Moses was certainly comprehensive enough; but ecclesiastical legislation in the East has added to it, and introduced the fictitious relationships of god-parents and foster-brothers, and the like. In practice, these rules are found to be so intolerable that the clergy have been obliged to exercise largely the power of dispensation; but that opens a wide door to intrigue and bribery. Half the quarrels between priest and people grow out of the manner in which this dispensing power is exercised in matrimonial affairs.

Certainly Christianity knows nothing about matters in themselves unlawful, but which may be made just and right by paying a few piastres to a priest. That whole system, with all its append-

ages, will be abolished, and the priestly revenue derived therefrom be dried up. Such changes in social habits and domestic institutions, to be brought about safely, must begin from within and develop gradually, and not be forced upon society by foreign influence acting from without; and the Christian reformer should be contented to wait for this gradual development.

The present system of betrothal is much the same, I suppose, as it was in ancient Bible days?

It is a sort of half marriage, accompanied with religious ceremonies, and the settling of the nature and amount of dower which the bridegroom is to give—a custom equally ancient. This, too, in its present form and essence, is destined to give way before the advancement of a higher Christianity, or at least to be so modified as to make marriage a less commercial transaction, in which the affections of the parties have no concern. As a part of that system by which relatives dispose of the hand and heart of a poor victim long before she is old enough to have any notions of her own, it needs to be greatly modified.

Neb'a Sŭnnîn, September 2d.

You are early this morning; it is still quite dark.

Not so early as you think; our camping-ground lies in the deep shadow of Sŭnnîn, and the sun will be two hours up before his rays strike our tent. But early rising is indispensable on such a journey. Breakfast will soon be ready, and then the tents must be struck, and everything strapped tight and safe, to insure against the possible accidents or adventures which may befall the mules while climbing up and down these mountains.

To what were we indebted for the noise and confusion during the night? I was startled out of a profound sleep by the report of a gun close to my head. My first thought was that we were attacked by robbers; but as you took the affair quite philosophically, I did the same, and, burying myself beneath these ponderous quilts, soon forgot all about the disturbance.

The explanation is simple enough. After the moon had set, leaving us in the dark, something frightened the horses, and Yûsuf, roused out of sleep, declared he saw a large wâhsh creeping up towards them. Seizing his gun he blazed away at it, without reflect-

ing that the flash and the roar would startle the horses. They, of course, pulled up the stakes to which they were tethered, and plunged about amongst the rocks. The mules did the same, and a general stampede followed. After much shouting the panic subsided, the animals were caught and re-tethered, and, muttering curses upon Yûsuf, his gun, and his wild beast, the muleteers were soon fast asleep, covered over head and ears in their 'abas.

The danger, however, was not from robbers, but one of the mules got entangled in the tent ropes, and threatened to drag the whole tabernacle away in its fright, and that proceeding is no trifling accident, as I have experienced more than once. But it is time to mount and march. We must take our lunch with us, for we will find no khâns along the road as we did yesterday. The tents will be pitched in a field above the Natural Bridge, and near the canal that comes from Neb'a el Leben.

Are bears and wolves still found in these mountains?

Wolves are not uncommon, especially in the wildest and least frequented regions. Bears, however, are extremely rare. I have never seen one during all my rambles, though others of my acquaintances have on these very mountains, but they could not get near enough to shoot them.

Many years ago I encamped at this same Neb'a Sŭnnîn, one clear, calm evening in the month of August. After dinner my companion, but recently arrived from America, resolved, in spite of my protestations and warnings, to climb to the top of Sŭnnîn to see the moon rise over Anti-Lebanon. The whole western side of this mountain was in deep shadow, and I saw my friend disappear in the darkness with considerable solicitude. Directing one of the muleteers to follow in the line of his adventurous ascent, I set about collecting thorn bushes and brushwood to make a bonfire at the proper time to guide him back to the tent. In about an hour I was startled by the sound of a deep, long-drawn howl, a little north of the ravine by which my friend intended to gain the summit. That was soon followed by another, still farther north, and that again by a third, in the same direction, until the whole mountain-side resounded with ominous howls.

The muleteers said they were bears, but I was sufficiently fa-

miliar with the howl of the wolf to recognize perfectly what they were. Lighting the bonfire, I sent one of the men to go as far as he could in the dark and fire off his gun, from time to time, as a signal to my companion; his courage carried him but a short distance from the camp, and soon both he and the other man returned, declaring that they dared not remain out in the dark. To make the story short, the rash adventurer got back to the tent about midnight, but thoroughly tired out. Far from reaching the summit, he had been drawn into the centre of the mountain, along a rough, water-worn channel, until, after unavailing efforts to get on and up, he found himself at the foot of a perpendicular cliff, which could not be scaled, and was obliged to return.

Is the ascent, then, so impracticable?

By daylight it is not; but in the darkness it is folly to attempt it; and at any time it would task the endurance of most persons to accomplish the ascent and return in the afternoon. I made my first attempt more than forty years ago. Our camp, on that occasion, was near the southern base of the ridge, and it took two hours' steady riding from it to reach the first snow. There we left our horses, and set out on foot. The climb was fatiguing, but at the end of an hour and a half we stood upon the topmost pinnacle of the mountain. Many have been the vicissitudes of fortune, and the changes which civil wars and revolutions have brought upon this land from that day to this, and yet the outlook from the summit of Sŭnnîn, eight thousand six hundred feet above the blue Mediterranean, remains essentially the same.

With my glass I could discern the oak-clad sides of Mount Tabor in the south, the desert of Arabia in the east, and the faint outline of Cyprus, a hundred miles away, over the sea, westward; and to the north the Lebanon range extending to the highest point of the mountain above the Cedars. On the left hand Hermon and Anti-Lebanon, the long plain of Cœlesyria, with the ruins of Ba'albek and the meandering Lîtâny; on the right, Tyre and Sidon, the rock-bound coast, the villages on the mountains, and the wide-spreading plain, while the city of Beirût lay gleaming in the sun almost at our very feet. And what shall be said of the sea, stretching from north to south, and westward to the sky?

The descent over the snow to where we had left our horses was accomplished in less than half the time it had taken to reach the summit. There our cook awaited us with some lemonade, which he had prepared by boiling the snow, and then cooling the water thus obtained with pieces of frozen snow, cold as ice could have made it. The lemonade was most refreshing, for a hot sirocco wind had set in, and we were almost suffocated.

Walking on the snow, and surrounded with snow-banks, it is more natural to suppose that you suffered from the cold, instead of being oppressed by the heat.

The sirocco passes over high mountains, even when buried in snow, without losing its peculiar character; apparently absorbing no moisture, nor having its temperature essentially lowered. The thermometer stood at 100°, and we were glad to avail ourselves of the friendly refuge from the heat afforded by "the shadow of a great rock." There we remained until the approach of evening admonished us to seek a more desirable place to spend the night. Descending round the south-east shoulder of Sŭnnîn, we followed a path made by the mountaineers, who carry frozen snow at that season to the villages and cities below.

For miles the path ran along the very edge of shelving declivities, which appeared to sink far away to the level of the Bŭkâ'a, and our muleteers amused themselves and us by rolling large stones down the mountain-side, which, with giant leaps and rumbling, crashing roar, went thundering to the bottom. As the shadows of evening lengthened, and the moon rose over the dark ramparts of Anti-Lebanon, those sturdy Druse muleteers unsheathed their short, broad swords, fired off their guns, joined hands, and, marching on before us, began to sing their familiar war-song. They sung in chorus, some of them an octave below, some an octave above the rest, and at times one would lead and all the others respond with a heartiness that made the welkin ring, while their loud, harsh voices echoed from cliff to cliff, and were lost in the labyrinths of the deep ravines below.

At length their warlike demonstrations, their vocal music, and their mimic march subsided; a dreamy silence came over us, and thus we continued the descent, hour after hour, searching for wa-

ter, near which we might encamp for the night, but not a drop was to be found in that apparently endless ravine. Finally, about midnight, we reached a village on the edge of the Bŭkâ'a, called Shemustâr, where we were able to obtain water for ourselves, our horses, and our teapot; and there we encamped, and slept as only weary travellers can sleep after such prolonged fatigue.

Our present position is near the border-line between the district of el Metn and the far more celebrated one of el Kesrawân, which lies north of this profound gorge of the Dog River. And now I advise you to dismount and walk, as any one either merciful to his beast or careful of his own neck will do, when about to descend into such a wady, at least fifteen hundred feet deep.

This succession of zigzags, windings, and turnings, down broken rock-cut steps and over smooth split-up ledges, is, indeed, indescribable, but I have no longer any criterion by which to decide what is or what is not a practicable road on these mountains.

We have, in fact, taken a wrong path, which has led to a mill at the bottom of this fathomless wady of Biskinta. But we need not regret the mistake, as it has given you an opportunity to see what these horses, mules, and mountain donkeys can accomplish, even when they are heavily loaded.

I have been watching some of them bringing grain to the mill. One man in front steadied the sagacious beast by holding hard against its head, while another, with the tail in both hands, acted as a drag behind, and thus all three came sliding down together. After lunch I should like to examine the primitive machinery of that flour-mill driven by this noisy mountain stream.

Let us now enter the mill. The entire machinery, you perceive, is extremely simple. The upper millstone is of light, porous lava, about five inches thick, and four feet in diameter, driven round, horizontally, over the lower stone, by a water-wheel turning the same way, the shaft of which penetrates the centre of both the millstones, and is firmly fitted into the upper one. A wedge-shaped box is suspended above a hole near the middle of the upper stone, and from it the wheat descends, in a dribbling stream, through the hole upon the lower millstone. The flour is thrown out from an aperture on the side of a narrow rim made of hard mortar around

the lower stone, which also prevents it from being scattered hither and thither in the process of grinding. That man collects the flour, from time to time, with a bit of lath, and pushes it into a sack conveniently suspended for its reception. There is no machinery for bolting, but the bran is separated from the flour by a sieve whenever there is need for a batch of bread. Of course there are much larger mills than this, having more than one set of millstones, driven with greater water-power, and producing far larger results; but the method followed is essentially the same in all these mountain mills, as well as in those upon the plain.

Yûsuf, I see, has purchased a large quantity of that wonderfully thin and tough bread, which so much resembles sheets of brown paper cut round. Having watched the process of grinding flour, I should like to be shown how bread is made from it.

He says the loaves are fresh baked, and that the oven is close by. I hear the pat, pat, patting of the women around the tannûr of this small hamlet connected with the mill. There we will find a merry group busy in achieving a baking.

The tannûr, as you see, is merely a hole in the ground, about three feet deep and two feet in diameter, lined with cement and smoothly polished. It is filled with thorn bushes, dry grass, and weeds when it is to be heated, or with any kind of fuel that will make a sudden and fierce blaze; and the heat is kept up by throwing in a fresh supply, as occasion requires. Three women are necessary to carry on the operation of baking to advantage. One to roll or pat out the dough into comparatively thin loaves; another to manipulate each loaf, tossing it from hand to hand, and over her arms, so as to expand regularly when thrown upon a round cushion made for the purpose; and the third woman to clap the loaf on the cushion upon the heated interior side of the tannûr, and tear off the one which is sufficiently baked. A shed is generally built over the tannûr, or it is excavated in the floor of a small room, open in front, by which it is made easy of access, and sufficiently protected from the rain and the snow during the winter.

The loaves are not as thick as ordinary pasteboard, and are from one foot to a foot and a half in diameter. The bread is called markûk, that is, "rolled," or made thin; and when the tannûr is

quite hot two loaves can be thus baked "in a minute," and it is no unusual thing to see a pile of one hundred and fifty of these thin loaves by the side of the women baking at the tannûr. Fresh, hot, and crisp, this bread is excellent eating, but in two or three days it becomes as tough and as hard as leather.

It is evident that these women at the tannûr do not always use leaven, nor do they wait until the dough has had time to rise.

Not when they are in haste; neither did most of the women mentioned in the Bible. Instead of that, however, they mingle with the dough a large amount of salt. And though it appears to us an inferior bread, yet it is the very staff of life to those hale and hearty sons of the mountains. Their morning, noon, and evening meal is largely made on bread, and often there is very little else. The peasant whose bins are stored with wheat sufficient for the wants of his family during the winter feels but little concern about other sources of supply until the coming harvest.

There is a kind of oven shaped like a hollow cone, having a hole in the top, into which is cast the same sort of fuel as that used in the tannûr. The ashes are swept away through a small door on one side when the smooth pebbles with which the bottom of the oven is paved are thoroughly heated, and the bread is laid upon them. I never saw that kind of oven used except by some peasants on the plain of Acre. Of course there are other modes of making and baking, and in the cities the public ovens can bake bread and prepared meats in large quantities, and in any form desired by the natives or foreigners. The making and baking of bread is often referred to in the Bible, and the Hebrew word for oven is the same as the Arabic "tannûr," and probably signifies substantially the same thing.

Such ovens, however, would not be convenient for a nation constantly moving from place to place, as were the Hebrews in the Wilderness of the Wanderings.

They had portable ovens, and possibly made use of the sâj, which is of iron, in shape like a large bowl, and of various sizes. Placed over burning embers, like a cover to a dish, it is quickly heated, and the dough spread on the upper, or convex, side is soon baked. The sâj is pre-eminently the oven of the Bedawîn, though

they also bake by the simplest of all methods, under hot embers, and the bread thus made is savory, especially to the tired and the hungry. The loaf baked upon the sâj is thicker than markûk, and laid on in strips, not more than four inches broad and eight long. I have eaten that bread hot from the sâj on the banks of the Jordan, near its entrance into the Dead Sea, and found it quite palatable under the circumstances.

It is time to find the way up and out of this profound Wady Biskinta, and resume our ride to the Natural Bridge.

Passing through that solitary forest above the flour-mill, we have disturbed a number of eagles; what has attracted them to the cliffs in this tremendous ravine?

They are griffin vultures, and the explanation of their presence is found in the proverb quoted by our Lord: "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."[1] In his prophetic discourse about the destruction of Jerusalem he probably had in mind the vultures, which were commonly called eagles, just as these flying above our heads are, by the natives of this country. Whether this parable be interpreted figuratively to signify the eagle-headed standards of the Roman legions, or literally the implied doom of the Holy City, was terribly significant. Jerusalem was then rapidly becoming a moral carcass, and the eagles were already on the wing, and erelong they did gather together at its awful destruction. Eagles are found on Lebanon and throughout this country, and the allusions to them and to their habits in the Bible are the results of actual observation, and exceedingly accurate.

We take no note of time as we ride along gazing upon scenery too grand for description. For a considerable distance we have had, on our left, a very wilderness of great, jagged pinnacles, having a strange resemblance to fluted columns and the many-shaped turrets of Gothic architecture.

The rock, which the architects of Nature have fashioned so fantastically, is an intensely hard limestone, which, when struck, gives out a clear, metallic ring quite unexpected. There is a far more remarkable wilderness of similar rocks on the other side of the valley of the northern branch of Nahr el Kelb.

[1] Matt. xxiv. 28.

One is continually meeting with surprises on these gigantic mountains. For the last half-hour I have noticed with astonishment that the entire surface over which we have been riding is literally covered with casts of various kinds of shells.

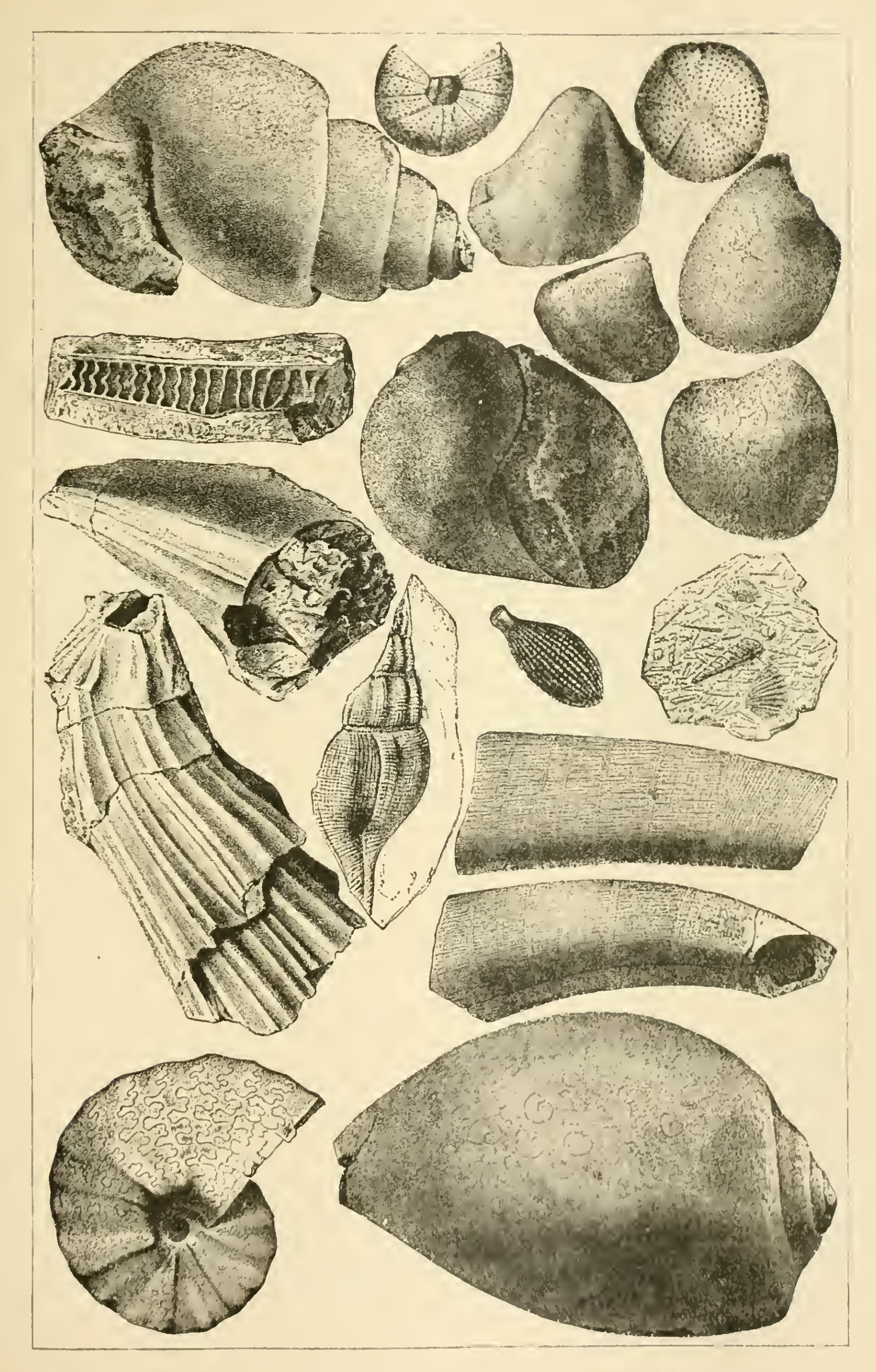
No intelligent traveller can wander about over Lebanon without having his attention frequently attracted to such countless fossils. Those most abundant in this neighborhood are varieties of cardium, venus, arca, mactra, trigona, and strombus. They are, however, mere casts, the shell having disappeared entirely from every specimen. There are localities in Lebanon where the petrified shell remains quite perfect. That is especially true in regard to large deposits of ostræ, exogyra, ammonites, echinus, turritella, nerinea, hippurites, and star-fish. There are, also, two or three localities of fossil fish: one near the convent of St. George, above the bay of Jûneh; and another at a village called Hâkil, on the mountains, three hours north-east of Jebeil.

What is most astonishing is, not the existence of such fossils, but the inconceivable quantity of them. It is no exaggeration, but the simple fact, to say that the road and the entire face of the country, in many places, are covered with them. Dr. Anderson gave special attention to the fossils of Lebanon; and in the appendix to the official report of the United States Expedition to the Dead Sea will be found a very interesting description of the fossils of Syria, illustrated by thirty-two plates, in which more than two hundred and fifty specimens have been accurately delineated. Many of the original specimens in those plates once belonged to me, and I recognize in them the familiar features of old friends.

Instead of going direct to the tents, we have been riding for nearly an hour through an almost pathless wilderness of ragged rocks and across stony fields to visit the remains of two ancient temples near the ruins of that old tower now called Kŭl'at el Fukra, the castle of the water-shed.

One is surprised and astonished to find such remains of antiquity in a bleak mountain solitude like this. Where were the people that required such temples for their worship?

Farther south are the shapeless remains of the nameless town, but who its inhabitants were is not known with any certainty.



CASTS OF FOSSIL-SHELLS COLLECTED ON LEBANON

This massive square tower stands on the water-shed of this region, and commands a fine view southwards down Wady es Salîb. It was built of large stones, without mortar—some of them six feet long. The entrance faced the east, and over it is a portion of a Greek inscription, nearly illegible, but which Dr. Robinson says contains "the name of the Emperor Tiberius Claudius." There is a staircase, ending now at the upper story, which probably led to the top of the tower. The whole structure, with its interior chambers, is in a ruinous condition. It may have been a sepulchral monument, and never intended for purposes of defence.

Let us walk through these fields of Indian corn to the ruins of the principal temple, in the midst of that labyrinth of rocks, five minutes south of the tower.

No more appropriate site could have been chosen for a fortress, but a temple is singularly out of place here. The entire edifice must have presented a very picturesque appearance, with its rock-hewn court and portico of many columns, facing eastwards towards the Lebanon and the rising sun.

This labyrinth of limestone rocks and the temple in the midst are graphically described by Dr. Robinson:

"The singularity is," he says, "that the strata are perpendicular, and have been worn away by time and weather, so as to present various forms of columns, needles, blocks, and ridges, separated by narrow clefts, chasms, passages, little chambers, and recesses; the whole rising up some twenty or thirty feet or more, and all exceedingly wild and rugged. On the eastern side the rocks were cut away for a space large enough for the temple and a portion of its court. The walls of rock thus formed served, towards the front, as sides of the court; but the remaining part of the court, farther east, was built out with walls of a yellowish-colored limestone, with an entrance in front by a portico of many columns, all of the same kind of stone. Indeed, the whole front of the court seems to have been highly ornamented. The body of the temple stood farther back, amongst the rocks, and on a terrace higher than the court. It was built of the same yellowish limestone. The stones are large, and were laid up with cement. The noble portico on the eastern front was composed of either four or six large col-

umns of rose-colored limestone three feet nine inches in diameter, with Corinthian capitals. From long exposure these columns now appear blue on the outside. The temple we judged to have been



RUINED TEMPLE NEAR KŬL'AT EL FUKRA.

not less than one hundred feet long by fifty feet broad. But so entire is the prostration and confusion that accuracy is out of the question."[1] A statement which we can fully confirm.

In the field east of the temple are the remains of a plain but massive enclosure, constructed of large blocks of hewn stone, probably a tomb. Some of the stones are over twelve feet long and three feet thick, but there are no inscriptions nor any architectural ornamentation upon them. Traces of foundations are also to be seen to the south and north, and a few rock-cut tombs.

A short distance below this temple the road from the plain near the mouth of the Dog River passes along to the Natural Bridge, and we shall follow it to our tents.

Looking down this wady and over the mountains between us

[1] Rob. Res. vol. iii. pp. 612, 613.

and the sea, that road must be extremely rugged and wild, and in many places remarkably picturesque.

It is only by penetrating into these mountains along such unfrequented paths, descending into profound depths, and rising to sublime heights, that any adequate idea of what Lebanon really is can be obtained. Following the northern bank of the river to the weir, the path winds through the pines, and zigzags up the precipitous side of that rocky chasm of the Dog River for half an hour. Reaching the summit of the ridge, the ascent is gradual but steady, along a worn and stony road, for about two hours to the village of 'Ajeltûn. In many places the view to the north and south, and over the sea westward, is extensive and magnificent.

For miles north-east of 'Ajeltûn the scenery is very peculiar and striking. The path passes through the midst of a region of limestone rock of fantastic shapes and sizes, resembling houses, castles, fortresses, temples, columns, buttresses, and towers, round, square, and tapering to a needle-point. Some of those natural columns are over forty feet high, and are surmounted by large, flat slabs of rock, looking, at a distance, like gigantic centre-tables. Issuing from that labyrinth near the village of Kulei'ât, the road descends steeply for an hour down Wady es Salîb to the banks of the northern branch of the Dog River. The water in that gorge dries up in the autumn, for the stream from the fountains of Nahr el Leben and Nahr el 'Asal is entirely absorbed by irrigation.

The valley of Nahr es Salîb, especially the bed of the stream, is a wild chaos of enormous rocks which have been brought down by the winter floods, or have fallen from the cliffs on either side of the wady. Those cliffs rise in many places almost perpendicularly for twelve and fifteen hundred feet, and the ascent, where it is possible, is not only difficult but actually dangerous. The distance from 'Ajeltûn to the Natural Bridge is about four and a half hours to an unencumbered rider, but it took our party, on one occasion, seven hours, owing to the difficulty of descending and ascending the profound gorge of Nahr es Salîb. An easier but much longer road to the Natural Bridge leads from Kulei'ât, through a region of fantastic, castellated rocks, around the northern side of the gorge, and by the village of Fureiya, in the valley below Neb'a el 'Asal.

From where does this canal, along which we have been riding, derive its abundant supply of water, and of what special service is it in this bleak and rocky region?

It comes from Neb'a el Leben, and is used entirely for irrigation. On these lofty declivities of Lebanon, which we are now traversing, the peasants sow their wheat and barley in August and September, that the seed may take firm root before the fields get buried under deep snow, which often begins to fall in October, and remains till the following April. As there rarely is sufficient rain in the autumn to soften the soil, that early sowing can only be accomplished by flooding the ground with water from such canals. When sufficiently saturated, a man, with the wheat in a basket, scatters the seed over the surface, while another starts his plough, drawn by the leanest of lean kine, and mixes up the earth, wheat, and stones in a very miscellaneous manner.

The only result one would expect from this soil, treated in that fashion, would be an abundant harvest of stones.

There are the tents pitched on the south side of the canal, and commanding a magnificent view down Wady el Leben, and over the mountains far away northwards. The Natural Bridge is not five minutes distant from the tent door.

September 2d. Evening.

I have been down to the Natural Bridge, and have followed the foaming, dashing stream up the wild chasm to its source. It bursts out amongst the rocks under the cliffs of Jebel Sŭnnîn, and is as clear and cold as ice. Leben, I suppose, suggests to the Arab mind the purest and most refreshing beverage with which the delicious water of that great fountain can be compared.

Neb'a el Leben, fountain of milk, and Neb'a el 'Asal, fountain of honey, farther north, in a figurative sense abundantly confirm the Scripture, and emphatically illustrate the promise of the Lord to the Hebrews concerning this country: "I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto a land flowing with milk and honey" —"a land of fountains that spring out of the hills."[1]

One of the most impressive views of that astonishing bridge is obtained from beneath the gigantic span of the rocky arch. From

[1] Exod. iii. 17; Deut. viii. 7.



JISR EL HAJR—THE NATURAL BRIDGE.

there the wild gorge of the river below the bridge, and that of the stream from Neb'a el 'Asal on the north-east, and beyond them the cliffs of the distant mountains of the Kesrawân, are seen at once, as if looking through the chaotic ruins of a mountain tunnel.

I have visited this wild, mountainous, and rocky region several times during the past forty years, and with ever-increasing interest. The height of Jisr el Hajr, or the stone bridge, measuring on the northern side, is one hundred and fifty feet above the bed of

the stream; on the southern side it is about half that height. The span is over a hundred and sixty feet, and the curve is so regular and clean cut that one can scarcely believe that it is entirely natural. The thickness of the rock above the arch is thirty feet; and the breadth on top, where the road passes over it, from ninety to one hundred and fifty feet. There is an excavated amphitheatre south of the bridge, about three hundred feet in diameter, and enclosed by a perpendicular wall of limestone rock about one hundred feet high. In those cliffs, and in the sides of the chasm, down which the stream from Neb'a el Leben rushes, flocks of wild pigeons and hundreds of field-sparrows have built their nests, and thither they gather in the evening in merry conclave.

The region west of our present position, extending from the Dog River on the south, to Nahr Ibrahîm, the classic Adonis, on the north, is called el Kesrawân, the Holy Land of the Maronites. "There the wicked [Druses] cease from troubling; and there the weary [Maronites] be at rest." Though the Maronites are met with in all parts of Syria, no Druses are seen in the Kesrawân, and none are allowed to reside there. From the time of Neibuhr and Volney, at the least, travellers have been made familiar with the Kesrawân, its villages, churches, convents, monks, nuns, priests, bishops, and patriarchs. All these proclaim aloud the piety and zeal of the clergy, and, alas! the ignorance and superstition of the people.

The Maronites are of Syriac origin, and the earliest notice of them is as schismatic heretics of the Monothelitic sect, settled along the head-waters of the Orontes, in the fifth century. They derive their name from John Maro, their first bishop and patron saint, who was killed by Justinian. During the fierce persecutions directed against them by the Emperors of Constantinople they retired to the inaccessible heights of Lebanon, and there set at defiance all the wiles and assaults of their enemies. When the Crusaders invaded this country they united with them against the Saracens, and in the twelfth century they renounced their heretical dogma of the divine and human nature of Christ having but one will, and became reconciled to the Roman Catholic Church.

It was during their long rebellion against the Catholic faith that they were generally called Mardaites, from a word which signifies

rebels. Though they have become bigoted Papists, Syriac is even yet their sacred language; and their ecclesiastics are required to read parts of their liturgy in that language. They are eminently religious, and singularly intolerant and superstitious. Every hamlet has its church, and many a conspicuous mountain summit is crowned with a convent for monks or nuns, or for both; and it is said that at least one-third of the land in the Kesrawân belongs to the convents and other ecclesiastical institutions.

Their parish priests are generally selected by the people from amongst themselves, and may be married before being ordained. If the wife of the priest dies he cannot marry a second, and must remain a widower for the rest of his life. Like the priests, the bishops are all natives of the country, and they elect the patriarch, who is confirmed by the Pope. The Maronite Patriarch is, in fact, the Pope of Lebanon. He is the spiritual head of the sect, and exercises great authority over its temporal affairs. His office is one of dignity and power; and he usually resides, in ecclesiastical state, at the celebrated convent of Kanôbîn, in the wild gorge of the sacred river el Kadîsha, below the Cedars.

The Maronites, the most numerous body of Christians in el Kesrawân, amount to over one hundred thousand. The people are tillers of the soil, cultivators of silk, and manufacturers and traders in a small way; but generally all are very poor and extremely ignorant. Education is not encouraged, and liberty of conscience is unknown. Two or three colleges, so called, testify to the value the Pope, the Jesuits, and the Maronites place upon the education of candidates for the Roman Church. The college at Ghŭzîr and that at 'Ântûra are in the hands of the Lazarists and Jesuits. The most celebrated, however, is that of the Maronites at 'Ain Warkah. But the entire hierarchy is an omnipresent and stifling religious incubus; and all classes and conditions of the people are devoted to the worship of saints, and especially of the Virgin Mary.

Have the Maronites on Lebanon no feudal families of sheikhs and emîrs, like those of the Druses?

The chiefs of the Mardaites, or rebels, have dwindled down to but three families of sheikhs—those of Beit el Khâzin, in the Kesrawân; of Beit Habeish, farther north; and of Beit ed Dahdâh,

north of them. Their chronicles are largely made up of domestic quarrels, intrigues, horrible assassinations, and petty wars, and they carry up their genealogy to a fabulous date; but the earliest notice of those sheikhs goes back no farther than the sixteenth century. They have now greatly declined in wealth and importance; and, like the emîrs of Beit Shehâb and el Lema, they are surely and rapidly subsiding into the category of ordinary fellâhîn. Such feudal families are a curse to any people, and the sooner they are absorbed into the far greater family of the human race the better; and yet the Maronites glory in their sheikhs, their record, and their mountain retreat of el Kesrawân.

I can readily believe that these rude and hardy mountaineers, residing in such romantic wilds and almost isolated from the world, have become intensely attached to their secluded valleys and ravines, their towering cliffs and rugged mountains, and to the primitive simplicity of their native villages and unpretentious homes.

That is certainly the case. They are a romantic and picturesque people; and their religion also, such as it is, appears to be omnipresent. One is never out of the sight of a priest, a nun, a monk, or a bishop; and if not those, then a cross, a church, or a convent. Morning, noon, and at evening the mountains and valleys resound with the ringing of many-toned bells, and the effect is most impressive and suggestive. During the solemn silence of the night the monastery bell rings out its mighty peal on the ambient air; and immediately, to the right and to the left, from some lofty peak or profound ravine, others chime in with their melodious responses, which echo and re-echo along the mountain-sides, and far up the snowy summits of Lebanon; and then the deep, rich tones cease, and the chorus dies away, and all is still again.

VII.

THE NATURAL BRIDGE TO THE CEDARS.

Bird's-eye View of the Kesrawân.—Picturesque Hamlets and Flourishing Villages.—Convents Isolated in Winter.—Nahr es Salîb.—Flooded Fields and Ploughed-up Roads.—Cascade.—Neb'a el 'Asal.—Wady Shebrûh.—Volcanic Action and Fields of Trap-rock.—Energy and Industry of the People.—Products of the Soil.—Lebanon Wine.—Zûk Mŭsbah.—'Arak.—Sacramental Wine used by Papists and Greeks.—The Juice of the Grape.—The Wine Used at the Last Supper and the Feasts of the Jews.—"Unfermented Wine."—Wine, Ancient and Modern.—The Wine of the Bible.—The Hebrew Dĕbásh and Arabic Dibs.—Winter on Lebanon.—Monotonous Life of the Natives.—Mountain Houses.—Miscellaneous Company.—Animals, Smoke, and Fleas.—Smoking and Sleeping.—The Return of Spring.—Biblical Allusions to Manners and Customs.—Ancient and Modern Habitations.—Reminiscences of a Former Tour.—Lost in a Fog.—Magnificent Prospect.—The Lebanon Range.—Descent to 'Afka.—Walnut and Sycamore Trees.—Venus and Adonis.—Goats in the Clefts of the Rock.—A Tremendous Cliff.—Scene from the Bridge.—Mughârat 'Afka.—Source of the Adonis.—Three Cascades.—Temple of Venus.—Syenite Columns.—The Worship of Adonis.—Destruction of the Temple by Constantine.—Retrospective.—The Damsels of Phœnicia.—"Women Weeping for Tammuz."—The Poetry of Milton, and the Vision of Ezekiel.—"Smooth Adonis ran purple to the Sea."—Ancient and Modern 'Afka.—Metâwileh.—The Valley of Nahr Ibrahîm.—Bridge.—Emîr Ibrahîm.—Mâr Mârôn.—Burj Fatrah.—Ancient Aqueduct.—Plateau.—Wady el Muneitirah.—Wady el Mugheiyireh.—Eagles and Ravens.—Natural Bridge.—Grotto at el 'Aukûrah.—Wine-vats.—El 'Aukûrah.—Trap-rock.—Burckhardt.—Native Hospitality.—The Avenger of Blood.—Lofty Plateau.—Arab Encampment.—Transportation of Sheep to Egypt.—Pasture-lands of the Kurds.—Funnel-shaped Pits.—Jebel Jâj.—El Meshnakah.—Burr el Haithy.—"Timber of Cedar."—Wady Fedâr.—M. Renan's Description of the Ruins at el Meshnakah.—Rock-cut Tombs.—"Baal à la tête Rayonée."—Figures Carved in the Rock at el Ghîneh.—"The Image of Venus."—Ard 'Aklûk.—Hid Treasure.—Inscriptions on the Rocks.—Dr. De Forest.—M. Renan.—The Emperor Adrian.—Tannûrîn el Fôka.—Fog in Autumn.—Fossil Fish.—Hâkil.—Duma.—Iron Ore.—Wady Tannûrîn.—Ard Tannûrîn.—Wady ed Duweir.—Wady el Jauzeh.—Jebel en Nûrîyeh.—Theoprosopon.—Nahr el Jauzeh.—Kŭl'at el Museilihah.—Black-mail.—Cedar-grove.—The Emîr Beshîr and the British Fleet.—Manufacture of Pitch.—Trees Cut Down will often Sprout Again.—Ruins of a Convent.—Amyun.—El Kûrah.—El Hadith.—Wady el Kadîsha.—The Holy River.—Deir

Kanôbîn.—Maundrell's Visit to Kanôbîn.—As'ad esh Shidiak.—Hasrûn.—Conversing Across the Chasm.—Exceptional Cultivation.—Gorge of the Kadisha Described by Dr. Robinson.—"The Beauty and the Grandeur of Lebanon."—Bsherreh.—Bridge over the Holy River.—Productiveness of the Soil.—The Cedars of God.—A Sabbath of Rest among the Cedars of Lebanon.—The Cedar pre-eminently the Biblical Tree.—El Arz.—Biblical Allusions to the Cedar.—Cedar Wood.—The Palaces of David and Solomon and the Temple of the Lord.—The Temples of Zerubbabel and Herod and the Graven Images of a God.—Fragments of Cedar among the Ruins of Nineveh.—Cedar not Mentioned in the New Testament.—Juniper.—Pine.—The Thistle and the Cedars of Lebanon.—The Destruction of the Ancient and Modern Cedar.—Sunday-school under the Cedars.—The Cedar-tree of the Bible.—The Locality of the Cedars Described by Dr. Robinson.—Dean Stanley.—Canon Tristram.—Glacial Moraines.—The present Cedar-grove.—Age of the Cedars.—The Glory of Lebanon.—Four Cedar-trees Intertwined and Growing together.—Dean Stanley's Description of Old and Young Trees supporting one another.—Graceful Form and Shape of the Cedar.—Vain Effort to Protect the Young Cedars.—Lebanon could be Covered with Cedars.—Cedars in the Parks and Gardens of Europe.—"Full of Sap."—The Cedar not Used for Building Purposes.—Feast of the Cedars.—Modern Chapel.—Decline of Religious Zeal.

September 5th.

EARLY this morning I again walked up to the source of Nahr el Leben, and watched the great volume of water glide forth noiselessly from the base of the cliffs of majestic Sŭnnîn towering far above it. Though the stream was soon lost to sight amongst the rocks below, I could hear the roar of its waters as they rushed foaming down the many cascades towards the Natural Bridge. From the lofty heights above the fountain I obtained a bird's-eye view of the Kesrawân, down to the sea-shore, over the summits of those lower ranges of Lebanon which appear so precipitous and rugged from Beirût. That city itself and the Bay of St. George were distinctly visible far away to the south-west.

It seems scarcely credible that a region so limited in extent, and so broken up with bleak and barren mountains, should nevertheless be studded with picturesque hamlets and flourishing villages. They crown many a lofty ridge, and cling to rocky ledges and sloping hill-sides that seem to be quite unapproachable. Some of the convents, built upon isolated pinnacles, are in fact cut off for days and even weeks from all communication with the outer world by the snows of winter; while others, hid away in deep ravines, are sometimes nearly overwhelmed by sliding avalanches.

Where are we to encamp this evening?

At 'Afka, near the fountain of Nahr Ibrahîm, the source of the river Adonis; and it is time we were in the saddle. After crossing the Natural Bridge, we will ride over the intervening plateau and descend to Neb'a el 'Asal. the fountain of honey, from whence issues the twin stream which unites with that from Neb'a el Leben, and together form Nahr es Salîb, the northern branch of the Dog River. It is a short half hour's ride to the north-east; and, as is usual at this season, I see that the farmers have flooded the fields, to prepare them for sowing their winter wheat. We must pick our way through the spongy soil as best we can, with no little discomfort to the horses and their riders.

They have actually ploughed up the road through the fields, leaving not a trace of it to guide us on our way.

That is the custom in many parts of the country, and I have often been misled and perplexed by it. But the difficulty is now over, and we will soon reach the fountain. The stream from Neb'a el Leben, just before it unites with the waters from Neb'a el 'Asal, plunges over that high ledge of rocks west of us into the ravine below in one unbroken cascade.

The scenery around this Neb'a el 'Asal is desolate and dreary, and there is nothing so grand and picturesque in its immediate neighborhood as at the Natural Bridge—only a volume of water gliding forth between a chaotic mass of volcanic rocks and flowing in various directions over newly-ploughed fields.

The quantity of water is much greater during the rainy season, but it is always clear and cold. The natives pronounce it the best in these mountains. We will not only make a practical test of its virtues, here at the fountain-head, but also fill our "bottles" with it, for there is no other spring betwen this and 'Afka of equal excellence. The road from this place will lead us northward for several miles up Wady Shĕbrûh, a long valley having the main Lebanon range towering upwards on the east, and a parallel lower ridge bounding it on the west.

The greater part of this region, around the head-waters of the Dog River, appears to have been thrown up into its wild, rugged, and "dislocated" condition by volcanic action. The soil of the

fields on both sides of the road is of a very dark color, and seems to be composed altogether of disintegrated trap-rock.

It appears in many places in amorphous masses several hundred feet thick; but the land is extremely fertile, and produces exuberant crops of wheat and barley. Although the entire region northward to the Cedars is exceedingly mountainous, rocky, and rugged, and cut up by profound chasms and deep valleys, yet every available spot where a few handfuls of earth can be scraped together is carefully cultivated and thoroughly irrigated. The labor required to level down the fields, to build up and repair the terrace walls, and to keep open the small canals for irrigation, requires a degree of energy and industry amongst the people which is amply rewarded by abundant harvests. Wheat and barley, Indian-corn and all the principal cereals raised in this country are grown in the higher regions, and cover the hill-sides and climb the mountain heights. The mulberry, the vine, the fig and the olive, the walnut, the apple and the pomegranate, and many other fruit-trees nestle in the green valleys, giving beauty and variety to scenery itself unsurpassed by any on the Lebanon.

I have heard it stated that most of the wine of Lebanon is produced in the Kesrawân. Is much of it made there at present?

The quantity is quite limited, although the quality is said to be good by judges of such matters. The best is made at Zûk Mŭsbah; and the light wines obtained from some convents are especially celebrated. A few of those "self-denying institutions" are provided with the "still and worm" for the distillation of 'arak from the fruit of the vine, a favorite stimulant throughout the land, and some of the inmates are said to be too fond of that fiery kind of "wine-spirit" for their own good.

Do the priests or the monks use any substitute for wine in their religious ceremonies during the observance of the Lord's Supper?

There is not even a tradition in the Papal or Greek Church to countenance such a practice; on the contrary, both affirm that sacramental wine must be genuine wine.

Certain modern critics maintain that "the good wine" drank at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the "fruit of the vine" used and alluded to by our Lord at the institution of the holy supper,

was the pure juice of the grape.[1] Has any such beverage been known in ancient or modern times in this country?

The juice of either ripe or unripe grapes is now occasionally used as a refreshing beverage, similar to lemonade, especially on the mountains or in places where lemons are unobtainable. It is reasonable to suppose that such a beverage was both known and used in this land from time immemorial. From the context it is evident that "the good wine" of the miracle at Cana was of an intoxicating nature; and there is no proof that the "fruit of the vine" used at the Last Supper was not real wine. It is worthy of remark in this connection that the Jews give the same name to the wine which they use during the observance of the Passover, and that their invariable custom has been, and is now, to use such wine at their feasts. Christ says of himself, "The Son of Man is come eating and drinking; and ye [the Pharisees] say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber;" if Jesus drank wine on ordinary occasions, he would conform to the undeviating custom of the Jews and drink wine at the Passover.[2] It is well to remember that there is no mention either in the Old or New Testament of "the juice of the grape" having been used as a substitute for wine, or even as a refreshing beverage.

This matter of wine—especially "unfermented wine"—has been frequently and earnestly discussed by those living in countries where it does not exist as a beverage; is there now, or has there ever been, any substance to which such a qualifying designation can be applied in this country?

Wine is the fermented juice of the grape; and, so far as its essential elements are concerned, is substantially the same in all countries. Its color, taste, aroma, and intoxicating properties depend upon the quality of the grape and the method of its manufacture. The juice of the grape, in the process of wine-making, always has, and always will, pass through fermentation into the alcoholic state; it then becomes wine. No other kind of wine is known in Syria, and, so far as can be ascertained, it never had any actual existence. There is no evidence that there has occurred any important variation in the manufacture, the use, or the effects of

[1] John ii. 10; Matt. xxvi. 29.

[2] Luke vii. 34.

wine from remote antiquity, and it is idle to build theories in regard to the existence or the use of "the unfermented juice of the grape" upon mere suppositions which have no basis in fact.

The common name for wine in the Bible, in Greek, Latin, and English, is almost identical in sound, and equally comprehensive in signification. In Arabic the specific name, "khamr," expresses its nature, because it is fermented; and the Hebrew word, when not qualified by some explanatory term, has just the same meaning. No doubt the Hebrew and Greek words, translated "wine" in some parts of the Bible, were applied to various preparations of wine mixed with other beverages; there was also "spiced wine," "sweet wine," and "new wine," but the principal ingredient was wine—not unfermented grape-juice, not syrup, not honey; and the effects actually produced, and intended to be produced, were essentially the same as they are in modern times.

Is the Hebrew "dĕbásh," rendered "honey," the Arabic dibs?

It is a comprehensive term, and was used for both honey of bees and honey of grapes, and in the latter sense is equivalent to dibs. The best dibs is now made at Bhamdûn, by boiling down the juice of ripe grapes one-half or two-thirds to the consistency of syrup. A small quantity of clay is mixed with it to clarify it, after which it is beaten until it becomes quite thick. It is of a golden color, and will remain sweet for a long time. Dibs is stored in jars or skins for winter use, and is generally eaten on or with bread, but it is not used and never regarded as a beverage.

How do these Maronite mountaineers pass the time during the winter, cut off as they are from the outer world by the snow?

The difference between winter and summer, in these higher regions of Lebanon, is almost inconceivable to any one who has not had personal experience of it. Now the country is everywhere alive with the inhabitants of the villages, and many of them are almost deserted. Even the women and children are abroad in the fields and vineyards, and their voices are both merry and musical. But two or three months hence you will not meet a living creature on these mountain-roads. The flocks will all have been taken from their temporary folds on the mountain-sides, and either sent down to the plains below or housed with their shepherds in the hamlets

and villages. The very birds—the crow and the raven, the eagle and vulture—will have flown to a milder climate.

Owing to the winter rains the roads and paths will then be nearly obliterated, or become the channels of roaring torrents; mud and slush and snow will be encountered on every side; while chilling winds blow through the wadys, and freezing blasts rage around the ice-clad crags; and woe to the luckless wayfarer whom accident or necessity compels to be abroad. The natives who have not or cannot emigrate to the cities on the sea-shore pass the time as best they can in the villages, taking care of the stock, keeping up the smoky fires, and dropping in now and then upon their neighbors to while away the dreary hours with such converse as their circumstances suggest. Their low habitations are but poorly lighted and ventilated even in summer. In winter every crevice is closed, and what small windows there may be are plastered up tight, so that neither air nor light can penetrate except through the door into the one large room which constitutes the whole house. Within that one room are gathered men, women, and children, unto the second and third generation; dogs and donkeys, cows and sheep, goats and chickens—in short, everything living and moving in and about the place.

To us such a life would be dismal in the extreme.

I have sometimes spent the night in the midst of such a miscellaneous company, and occasionally with the addition of camels, horses, and mules, the latter a very disturbing element. It does well enough as an interesting experiment, but a night at a time is quite sufficient to test one's powers of endurance. Two unavoidable evils are intimately associated with those winter gatherings around the social hearth, and both are intolerable—the pungent smoke, which has no way of escape, and the fleas, which have no desire to do so. In such dismal abodes there is no light to read by, no book to read, and but little useful occupation either for old or young. The grand resource is smoking and sleeping. Of tobacco there seems to be an inexhaustible supply, and the sleeper is rarely exhorted to consider the ways of the ant and be wise. Thus these people hibernate, like bears in their dens, until the winter storms blow over and the mild breath of returning

spring gradually melts the snow from their neighborhood. Then they come forth and shake themselves, and prepare to follow their usual avocations, under a clear sky and a warm sun. It should be borne in mind that this description specially applies to the life of the unsophisticated mountaineers, which is essentially the same throughout the elevated regions of Syria and Palestine.

Was it always thus in this land?

The manners and customs of the peasants and farmers appear to have changed but little from very ancient times. The allusions to such matters in the Bible are few and incidental; but we may infer from them, and from other circumstances, that the ordinary habitations of the villagers, even at the beginning of our era, were no better than they are now, and the stall of the ox and the manger were then, as now, in the house. There are no houses of that period standing at the present day in any of the places frequented by our Lord in Galilee and the adjacent regions; but at the sites of some of those "cities" mentioned by Josephus there are foundations which indicate very inferior habitations. As they must be those of the largest and most substantial houses, the greater part, it would seem, were so small and ephemeral as to leave no trace behind. "Cities" of ten thousand inhabitants, according to his accounts, occupied sites where a modern village of as many hundreds would scarcely find sufficient room.

I am continually being reminded by the scenery through which we are riding to-day of other rambles over these picturesque mountains. This is not the first, nor even the fourth, time that I have passed this way. On one occasion the presence of a party of ladies and gentlemen added greatly to the interest of the excursion. We followed the valley from Neb'a el 'Asal northward to the base of a perpendicular cliff, where the road turns abruptly to the right and ascends the steep side of the mountain. It took an hour's hard climbing to reach the top of the pass, where we were promised a glorious outlook down to the sea over the region drained by Nahr Ibrahîm, the ancient river Adonis.

Long before reaching the summit we were completely enveloped by a dense, palpable mist, driven up the ravine by the west wind, and nothing could be seen ten steps ahead of us. The

descent was even longer than the ascent, and in many places all dismounted and walked, to relieve both horse and rider. Soon we lost our way, and the whole caravan seemed about to plunge off the narrow plateau into a fathomless abyss of cloudy vapor. It was impossible, however, to go very far wrong, since the tremendous chasm of the river on the left, and the cliffs of Lebanon towering to the sky on the right, allowed of but little margin to wander on either side. After rambling hither and thither, now on the edge of the cliffs, and then through the thick bushes, bewildered with numberless goat-paths, we finally got safely through that tangled wilderness, just as the mist began to rise and reveal the deep gorge of Nahr Ibrahîm below.

There we stopped and lunched upon the brink of a precipice which descends sheer down many hundred feet into the valley of the river. Just before we reached 'Afka there suddenly burst upon us a most magnificent prospect. The sun broke through the fog, filling the profound gorge of the river Adonis with golden light, and revealing the fantastic buttresses and rounded towers of the mountain ramparts. It was difficult to believe that they were not designed by man for the defence of the valley, but their colossal proportions dispelled all thought of human art.

This long range of Lebanon on our right rises several thousand feet, terrace above terrace and ledge above ledge of perpendicular rock. Masses of rock in some places seem to have been rolled from the summits above and swept down the mountain-side.

Many kinds of trees spring out of crevices in those gigantic walls; and along the narrow margin of those ledges bushes and underbrush grow and spread out into clumps, green and shady, but absolutely impenetrable; even goats cannot enter except in places where the shepherd has cut a way through for them.

This has been a long and fatiguing descent, and, from the imposing appearance of those massive buttresses ahead of us, on the right, towering to the sky, and which seem to bar our further progress, I conclude that we are not far from our camping-place.

'Afka is directly below us, but before we can reach it we will have to zigzag down the mountain-side along a road rough and rocky, and through tangled bushes and clumps of small trees for

some distance. After passing by the ruined temple of Venus, and crossing the bridge over the Adonis, we will arrive at our tents, pitched on the brink of the flowing river, and in the midst of a forest of walnut and sycamore trees.

'Afka, September 5th. Evening.

This is the most romantic spot we have visited in our travels through this country. With its cavern and fountains, its river and ruins, grove, myth, and fable, it rivals Bâniâs.

Here, according to ancient mythology, the beautiful Adonis, the favorite of Venus, was killed by a wild-boar, nor would she be consoled for his loss or allow his lifeless body to be removed until the gods decreed that he should return to her during the spring and summer, and that she might go to him in the winter. And thus we have a reference, in this tragic myth, to the changes of the seasons — the joyous spring and the generous summer, the dreary autumn and the mournful winter.

Let us walk out to the bridge, climb into the cavern above it, and then visit the ruined temple on the opposite side of the valley. The stream which we have just crossed rises near the cavern, tumbles over the road, and falls into the river below the bridge.

See that flock of goats creeping like ants along the perpendicular precipice, so high above our heads. How did they get there? and how can they escape from their perilous position?

The cliff above the cavern is more than a thousand feet high, but the rock strata form regular ledges, one above the other, extending to a considerable length, and overgrown with bushes. As for the goats, they manifest no anxiety about their exalted position or its supposed dangers. On the contrary, they appear to be enjoying themselves amongst the bushes up there, utterly regardless of the glorious prospect all around and the roar of these mighty waters hundreds of feet below them.

This stone bridge with its rounded arch may not be as ancient as some we have crossed, but the picturesque scenery which it commands is unsurpassed by any of them. Cliff and cave, streams and water-falls — this amphitheatre of rocks around it, and the placid basin of clear, cold water above it—all combine to make a natural picture of wonderful beauty and grandeur.

We are now about two hundred feet above the bank of the river near where our tents are pitched.

Scrambling up those great masses of fallen rocks and into this cavern is a feat not easily accomplished.

When I first visited Mughârat 'Afka a wide natural arch spanned the cavern near its mouth, and, by creeping over it, I reached an upper ledge, along which I penetrated into the mountain for a short distance, but discovered nothing very remarkable about it. In winter the stream which issues out of the cavern is, probably, the overflow of the main fountain springing up within the hidden and deeper recesses of the mountains. The streams that now burst forth from amongst the rocks below the cave are connected with the principal source of the river Adonis, and thus, in summer, they would be sufficient to draw off the water, as the quantity is then greatly decreased. Rushing down amongst the rocks, they fill the little basin above the bridge, and then the stream from it sweeps on for a short distance and falls, in quick succession, over the cliffs in three regular and beautiful cascades.

On our way to the ruins of the temple we will be obliged to cross another stream, which comes tumbling down the ravine from the north-west and enters the river below the falls.

Water, water everywhere, and what a deafening roar! This temple must have commanded a magnificent prospect — up the river, across the falls, over the bridge to the deep cavern above, and away to the top of that sublime cliff.

The site was well chosen on this bluff at the extreme end of the projecting ridge. The temple probably stood upon a platform on the highest of a succession of terraces raised up from the banks of the little stream that now flows out below it. The edifice itself could not have been a very large or imposing structure, to judge from its present ruins—a confused mass of well-squared stone, with very little architectural ornamentation. Some of the stones are large, and all are limestone, quarried from the rock in this region. One is surprised to find under the rubbish a column of red or Syenite granite, like the one in the village of 'Afka, which must have been brought from Egypt to Jebeil, and then transported up and down these mountains with incredible toil.



MUGHÂRAT 'AFKA—SOURCE OF THE ADONIS.



Byblus, the modern Jebeil, was the reputed birthplace of Adonis, and devoted to his worship; and this temple of Venus was erected here in commemoration of his tragic fate. Here were practised—in the month of Tammuz, or midsummer—the most licentious rites, down to the time of Constantine. That emperor, according to Eusebius and Sozomen, deemed such a temple unworthy of the light of the sun, and decreed its destruction. These ruins bear emphatic testimony to the thoroughness with which his orders were executed. There is something very impressive in the fact that we are looking upon the same scenery to-day which witnessed the celebration of the burial of Adonis, by the damsels of Phœnicia, many thousand years ago. We are listening to the solemn cadence of the same river, which murmured a requiem as they, with dishevelled hair and weeping and wailing, followed the funeral procession to this temple upon whose ruins we now stand!

Ezekiel says, "There sat women weeping for Tammuz" at the gate of the Lord's house.[1] Was the worship of Venus and Adonis transferred from this temple to that at Jerusalem?

The Grecian Adonis was probably none other than the more ancient Phœnician deity Tammuz; and it is supposed that the weeping of the Jewish women was in commemoration of the celebrations which took place annually at Byblus and in this place during the month of Tammuz, corresponding to our July. Milton, marshalling the gods of Canaan before Satan, thus alludes to Adonis and his worship:

> Thammuz came next behind,
> Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
> The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
> In amorous ditties all a summer's day;
> While smooth Adonis from his native rock
> Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
> Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale
> Infected Zion's daughters with like heat;
> Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
> Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,
> His eye survey'd the dark idolatries
> Of alienated Judah.[2]

[1] Ezek. viii. 14.

[2] Paradise Lost, Book I., lines 446 to 457.

The widely-known fable which ascribes the red color of this river to the blood of the beautiful Adonis may be thus explained: The first rains of winter carry down a large amount of sand, which gives to the water, and even the sea near the mouth of the river, a reddish color. I once encamped for two days at the mouth of the river, making excursions up the gorge as far as was practicable, and found vast formations of red sandstone on both sides, and particularly along the north-eastern bank. On a former visit I discovered what may possibly be the true origin of that mythical transformation, here at the very place where Adonis is supposed to have been killed. Just below our tents there is a mass of amorphous trap-rock, friable and loose, and of a blood-red color, quite sufficient to cause "smooth Adonis from his native rock run purple to the sea."

'Afka, September 6th.

We will have a long, and in some parts a fatiguing, ride today. This route from 'Afka to the Cedars commands magnificent views of the distant sea, and will lead us through some of the grandest scenery in Lebanon.

The farther one penetrates into these mountains the deeper is the interest they inspire. From the time when the women of Phœnicia were accustomed to visit that temple of Venus, thousands of years ago, until the day when Constantine ordered its destruction, a considerable town must have risen near this grand and picturesque source of the Adonis.

The ancient Apheca was deserted long ago. A few stones remain, larger and better squared than the rest, but they are the only traces of antiquity to be seen at this once celebrated place. The inhabitants of modern 'Afka barely exist in a village, beautifully situated in the midst of groves of walnut and other trees, on the south side of the valley and west of the ruined temple. They, and the people who occupy this wretched hamlet on the north side of the river through which we have just passed, are all Metâwileh, miserably poor, notorious thieves, and about the most degraded generation we have seen in this country. Being the sole representatives of their sect in this region, their houses were burned during the last civil war, and they have been but partially repaired since.

At sunrise this morning I had a grand view of the valley of Nahr Ibrahîm and the river gorge, quite down to the sea, from a high cliff above the cavern. I should like to explore that region, for it appears to be well wooded and romantic.

The river valley is lined with many kinds of trees—oak, sycamore, kharnûb, bay, plane, orange, and mulberry. But notwithstanding the brilliant foliage, the magnificent scenery, and the ceaseless and deafening roar of the river as it tumbles over the rocks, cascades, and mill-dams, the valley of Nahr Ibrahîm is very sickly, especially in the summer and autumn.

The gorge is wild, and in many places inaccessible. Profound chasms break down into it, on either side, upon whose beetling crags and projecting ridges a convent or a village is often seen standing out against the sky, or clinging to the rocks far above the foaming torrents of the river. Near its mouth Nahr Ibrahîm is crossed by a lofty bridge of a single arch, which has a span of sixty-three feet, and an elevation of thirty-six feet above the water. That bridge appears to be erected upon the foundations of one more ancient, probably Roman. Arab historians inform us that it was built by Emîr Ibrahîm, a nephew of Mâr Yôhanna Mârôn, who lived in the eleventh century; and from him the river is said to take its present name. That Mâr Yôhanna must not be confounded with John Maron, from whom the Maronites as a sect derive their name.

I have ascended the mountain on the north side of the river gorge for two hours, to examine the ruins of Burj Fatrah, not far from el Harf, a village situated on a conical peak seventeen hundred feet above the level of the sea. The remains are insignificant, but they may mark the site of a shrine dedicated to the worship of Thammuz. Burj Fatrah is perched upon the edge of a precipice overhanging the gorge of the river, and it made my head dizzy to gaze down into the fearful abyss and see the eagles sailing about above their nests far below my stand-point. The profound depths resounded with the ceaseless roar of the river—that eternal anthem which the Phœnician pilgrims must have listened to with mysterious reverence as they toiled up those mountains towards the temple of Venus, near the fountain of the Adonis.

The only remains of any importance in the valley of Nahr Ibrahîm are the broken arches of an ancient aqueduct that conveyed the water of the river to Jebeil. It was carried along the cliffs, on the south side of the gorge, until, near the narrow plain between the mountain and the sea-shore, it crossed over to the north side. The gorge there is about three hundred and fifty feet wide from cliff to cliff. The arches of the first tier of the aqueduct are eleven, and of about twenty-two feet span, supported by massive buttresses, eighteen feet thick, most of which are still standing. The main arch, above the bed of the river, had a span of fifty feet. Above the first tier of arches there was another, much narrower, and proportionately higher. The canal of the aqueduct appears to have been upon the top of them. The entire height of the aqueduct above the bed of the river was about one hundred feet.

Only one arch is now perfect, and it is apparently Saracenic. Indeed, most of the masonry of the buttresses is of the same order, but the lower part of them was built of larger, bevelled stones, leaving no doubt as to the antiquity of the original structure. The cliffs on either side of the river are in many places almost perpendicular, and hence most of the wall built into or on their sides to support the aqueduct has fallen away. The wonder is how it was possible to construct the work along such precipices. Upon reaching the plain the canal was carried northward through the modern village of en Nahra. A short distance beyond that village the line of the canal is over one hundred feet above the level of the sea.

The road we have been following northward is nearly level along this elevated plateau, which extends westward between the chasms of Wady el Muneitirah and Wady el Mugheiyireh. The streams from 'Afka and 'Akûrah, the main tributaries of Nahr Ibrahîm, flow through those valleys. This plateau is walled in—south, east, and north—by cliffs of great height and remarkable outline, closely resembling colossal towers and gigantic castles.

I notice flocks of small birds flying about the trees and chattering among the branches of the bushes, while hawks, vultures, and eagles sail majestically along over the profound chasms, and the omnipresent raven drops headlong from the cliffs above.

This pleasant ride of two hours has brought us to a natural

bridge of a single rock across the ravine, over which the road passes, and beneath which is the entrance to Mughârat el 'Akûrah.

Our party of ladies and gentlemen spent a whole morning exploring the hidden recesses of that cavern, and were greatly impressed by their subterranean experiences. Getting down to the low entrance of the cave was accomplished with difficulty, but, once inside of the grotto, we found the floor comparatively level. With many tapers, casting faint gleams of light into the darkness, we crept on and in for about one hundred yards; then, leaving the main grotto, and turning to the left along a broad passage, we followed it for perhaps two hundred yards. The floor in that part is uneven and slippery. Numberless pools of water, some shallow, others deep, filled to overflowing by dripping stalactites pendant from the roof, rendered our progress slow and rather critical.

Near the extreme end of that passage, which it was supposed we were the first to explore, is a lofty grotto, whose sides are incrusted with translucent, crystallized spar, through which the light from our tapers shone with a bright red color. What with singing and shouting to wake up the slumbering echoes, breaking off specimens of stalactites, and an occasional plash into the ice-cold water of some treacherous pool, we remained much longer in the grottoes than we supposed. When we got back to the entrance it was time to lunch, and that we enjoyed exceedingly, sitting on the smooth rock floor at the mouth of the cave. In former times that floor had been levelled, and the vats, troughs, and channels necessary for a wine-press were excavated out of the solid rock. The prospect outwards, looking under the natural bridge and down the deep gorge, was extraordinary and very picturesque.

The mighty range of Lebanon is here flanked and sustained by numerous round towers and many-shaped buttresses, even more gigantic than those above the cave at the fountain of the Adonis.

This village of 'Akûrah is a mile or more from the grottoes, and has a plentiful supply of water. It abounds in groves of walnut-trees, and is surrounded by vineyards and mulberry terraces. Being a centre for this part of the country, it has a blacksmith and carpenter, and a few shops, but the inhabitants are rude and fanatical. Through a cleft in that perpendicular wall of rock extending be-

hind the village, and which is over one thousand feet high, a road passes up the mountain from Jebeil to Ba'albek.

From 'Akûrah the level road we have been travelling thus far ceases, and we must toil up the mountain to the north-west of the village, for two thousand feet or more, over an immense formation of trap-rock extending westward for several miles.

Burckhardt spent a night in 'Akûrah in 1810. Learning Arabic in Aleppo, he assumed the character of a native, and, travelling through the country, threw himself upon the hospitality of the people. He says: "The mountaineers, when upon a journey, never think of spending a para for their eating, drinking, or lodging. On arriving in the evening at a village they alight at the house of some acquaintance, if they have any, which is generally the case, and say to the owner, 'I am your guest.' The host gives the traveller a supper consisting of milk, bread, and burgul, cracked wheat, and, if rich and liberal, feeds his mule or mare also. When the traveller has no acquaintance in the village he alights at any house he pleases, ties up his beast, and smokes his pipe till he receives a welcome from the master of the house, who makes it a point of honor to receive him as a friend and to give him a supper. In the morning he departs with a simple 'Good-bye.'"[1]

Burckhardt generally received a kind reception, but at 'Akûrah he was shabbily treated. The inhabitants, he says, have "a bad name amongst the people of this country," and "are accused of avarice and inhospitality." They neither receive travellers nor give a supper, nor sell them provisions for ready money. "The consequence of which conduct is, that the Akourans, when travelling about, are obliged to conceal their origin, in order to obtain food on the road." Not to go supperless, Burckhardt made the sheikh believe that he was "a Kourdine in the service of the Pasha of Damascus," and he, becoming alarmed, sent him some bread and cheese. Such were some of the customs in these mountains seventy years ago; but the traveller of the present day finds native hospitality greatly changed, and is more likely to be cheated by exorbitant prices than to receive gratuitous entertainment.

I first became aware of the existence of el 'Akûrah and its

[1] Burckhardt, p. 24.

people by the following incident: Late one evening during the winter of 1835 I was startled by the abrupt entrance into my room of a man completely disguised by his cloak, who threw himself down upon the floor before me, exclaiming, "I am your suppliant." Upon inquiry I found that he belonged to 'Akûrah, and having killed a man in the church, which we saw in passing, he had fled to Beirût, pursued by the avengers of blood. Some one had directed him to my house, as the safest asylum, and that accounted for his unwelcome intrusion. Through the influence of his relatives and friends the affair was finally settled by the payment of a considerable sum as blood-money.

The great elevation which we have now reached, on the highest part of this ridge, commands a wide prospect over a wilderness of bristling pinnacles, gigantic cliffs, and profound valleys—a vast and varied scene, such as no pen can describe and no pencil portray.

There is not a human habitation for many miles on this lofty, cold, and desolate plateau; but at this season of the year numberless goat-paths traverse it in every direction. They seem all equally well marked, and the traveller, if not provided with a local guide, will inevitably get bewildered and lost. He might, much to his surprise, stumble against a camel, and make the startling discovery that he has strayed into an Arab encampment.

The top of Lebanon is certainly the last place where one would expect to find those roving sons of the desert.

There is a tribe of sedentary or resident Arabs who pass the winter on the sea-coast, and pasture their insignificant flocks and herds on these heights in the spring and summer. In October they strike their tents, and with their cattle and flocks descend to the milder regions below. Before the transportation of sheep by steamers from this country to Egypt became general the high and level districts on Lebanon were the pasture-lands of the Kurds. They came from the north of Syria in the spring with thousands of sheep, which they sold as they proceeded through the country—in the summer to the villagers on the mountains, and in winter to the residents of the cities on the plains.

There are no fountains on those highest levels of Lebanon, but in the spring the melting of the snow affords drink for men and

cattle. Snow-water is often found during the summer in funnel-shaped holes or pits formed in the ground by the snow. There are hundreds of them on these lofty ranges; but, from my experience, I can caution those who desire to explore the summits of Lebanon not to expect to find an abundance of water in them. I could not get a drop from any of them in June.

This entire region down to the sea belonged, I suppose, in ancient times to Byblus, the modern Jebeil, and this part of it presents a most extraordinary appearance.

That long range of limestone rocks, west of our route, piled up in utter confusion, is called Jebel Jâj. It is composed entirely of huge isolated bowlders, amongst which are many oak-trees, old, gnarled, and scraggy, whose lower branches have been hacked and hewn off by charcoal-burners and shepherds. Long ago I spent a night on the east side of that rocky mountain. The object of that excursion was to visit some ruins at a place called el Meshnakah. After ascending the mountain east of Jebeil for three hours we came to Burr el Haithy, evidently an ancient site. Up to that place we had been accompanied by some workmen sent to construct a road by which the beams, cut down from a neighboring forest of pine-trees, could be transported on camels to the sea-shore at the mouth of Nahr Ibrahîm. It was in that way, perhaps, that the "timber of cedar" for Solomon's temple was brought "down from Lebanon unto the sea" by the "servants" of Hiram.[1]

Burr el Haithy is not far from el Meshnakah, or the place of hanging, as its Arabic name implies; but our guide took a wrong path, and soon involved us in one of the worst w'ar—a rocky place, abounding in tangled thorny thickets—that I ever encountered. It was only by dismounting, and forcing our frightened animals over breakneck rocks half concealed by the thick thorn-bushes, that we got through the w'ar—not to el Meshnakah, however, but to the bottom of the tremendous Wady Fedâr. We then followed up the wady to a ruin in the vicinity, and finally encamped for the night at the foot of Jebel Jâj. The next morning we returned to Jebeil, greatly disappointed at not having accomplished our purpose of visiting the ruins at el Meshnanak.

[1] 1 Kings v. 8, 9.

M. Renan was more fortunate, and in his splendid work, "Mission de Phénice," he gives a detailed description of the place and the ruins. He speaks in glowing terms of the wild and romantic scenery, and is convinced that the remains are those of a temple dedicated to the worship of Tammuz, Venus, and Adonis. The enclosure of the temple was rectangular, three hundred and twenty-five feet long by one hundred and sixty-six feet wide. The entrance was from the east. The walls—never very solid—are now mostly prostrate. Corinthian capitals and entablatures are found scattered amongst the débris, but their style and execution are rude and imperfect. Short columns are also found in a depression near the eastern end of the main court of the temple.

There are tombs with several loculi hewn in the rock—of a kind common all over Lebanon—having heavy stone covers. About five hundred feet north of the court a passage was cut through the rock, and on each side of the entrance to it is a large figure in a niche having Ionic pilasters and a cornice. On the sides of those figures are smaller ones, in the same general style, but all are so defaced that M. Renan is uncertain about their origin. As in nearly every other collection of such tombs in Syria, there are no inscriptions upon those at el Meshnakah, which may imply that neither Greeks nor Romans had any connection with them.

Ten minutes' walk to the east of the entrance to the temple court are the remains of a small sanctuary, and there was found, on a block, a figure which M. Renan says represents Baal, "à la tête rayonée." If really meant for Baal, that figure is a very interesting one. M. Renan found cut on the rocks at el Ghîmeh, south of el Meshnakah, between Nahr Ibrahîm and Mu'âmaltein, a group representing a man in a short tunic, carrying a lance, with which he is about to strike a bear standing up to attack him. Near that group is the figure of a woman seated, apparently mourning. These very naturally suggest the pathetic myth of Venus and Adonis, only the bear ought to be a boar. Another group, not far distant, consists of a man with two hunting-dogs.

M. Renan's quotation from Macrobius is very pertinent when taken in connection with those groups: "The image of Venus is found in Mount Lebanon having the head veiled, in a sorrowful

attitude, holding her face in her left hand enveloped in her robes. Tears are believed to flow from the eyes of those beholding her." As Macrobius was a non-Christian writer, about the beginning of the fifth century, he may not only have seen the image of Venus, but also "assisted" personally at her worship.

Ard 'Aklûk, as this plateau is called which we have been traversing, extends from the top of the ascent above el 'Akûrah northward for about two hours to the region around Tannûrîn el Foka. Owing to its lofty position, near the summit of the Lebanon range, the melting snow by day feeds the little rills that cross its surface; and the heavy dew at night refreshes the green grass, giving to this little plain the appearance of a pasture land well supplied with springs of water, and surrounded by high mountains, jagged cliffs, rocky precipices, and profound gorges. Most of Ard 'Aklûk belongs to the village of Tannûrîn et Tahta, or lower Tannûrîn, which is out of sight in a deep valley to the north-west of us.

Many years ago I spent several hours rambling over the wide, rock-strewn wilderness east of the range of Jebel Jâj, in order to examine some inscriptions upon the rocks. A number of peasants at work in the fields volunteered to conduct me to them. In the language of the natives a large isolated rock upon which letters are inscribed is called a burj, which means a tower. I soon discovered that the eagerness of those peasants to show me the mysterious "writing on the rocks," was occasioned by the belief that the inscriptions indicated the place where "hid treasure" was to be found. They kept watch over my movements, and were suspicious that my object in copying the letters was to obtain the key, dâlûl, or indicator, and that, having found the place, I would come again, secretly, and rob the buried treasure.

I examined some of those rocks and copied a few of the inscriptions, but there were rarely more than two or three words, generally only as many letters. Nearly all that I saw were on large isolated rocks, but some are cut upon the sides of cliffs, and are somewhat longer. I could make nothing of them, except that the name of the Emperor Adrian was found in most of them. Dr. H. A. De Forest afterwards copied a number of those singular "writings on the rocks." M. Renan devotes no less than twenty-

one folio pages of his work, "Mission de Phénice," to those inscriptions. He copied eighty, found in more than sixty places, and heard of others. His surmise may be the true one, as to the origin of those cuttings, that they were inscribed on the rocks, by order of the Emperor Adrian, to mark out the parts of the forest in that region which belonged to the Roman Government from those which were owned by private individuals.

M. Renan is not quite correct, however, in supposing that, with the exception of Dr. De Forest, he was the first traveller who had seen and copied those inscriptions. Others had done the same many years before; but to him belongs the credit of having carefully examined and illustrated them. None but those who have attempted to penetrate that rocky wilderness in Wady Tannûrîn and scale those perpendicular cliffs or cross those yawning chasms, can adequately appreciate the fatigue or even the danger attending such an achievement; and, after all, the results are very meagre and unsatisfactory to the explorer.

This small hamlet which we are passing through belongs to Tannûrîn, and called after it Tannûrîn el Fôka, or the upper. The place is only inhabited during the summer by some peasants from the village below, who plant Indian-corn and various kinds of vegetables in every available spot. About the middle of September they gather in their crops, and send everything down to the village before the first snows of winter render this region inaccessible. During many tours through this part of Lebanon I have had occasion to encamp two or three times at Tannûrîn el Fôka. Once, soon after our tents were pitched, a dense fog enveloped us, and night came on, cold and bleak, and "sabled all in black."

That was something novel in my experience on these mountains so early in the autumn; but the outer darkness only made the well-lighted tents more cheerful and the party more social. The peasants—men, women, and children—brought us chickens, eggs, green corn, leben, and plenty of fire-wood. They told us that after two or three weeks the entire region would be wholly forsaken, nor would a traveller pass over the road we had followed from 'Akûrah until March or April of the next year.

Midway between our present route and the sea-shore is some

of the grandest scenery in Lebanon. Gigantic cliffs break down in all directions, most of them nearly perpendicular, and all dipping westward at various angles. They open up distant views over valley, hill, and narrow plain to the sandy shore and out upon the boundless Mediterranean beyond. Soon after coming to this country I visited a locality of fossil fish at Hâkil, a village far down below us on the left. The fossils were found at the bottom of a deep wady, and at that time, when the locality was unknown, one could gather excellent specimens by the mule-load.

The fish were small but well preserved, and the rock in which they were embedded could be split into thin laminæ, and, no matter how thin, each face was coated with fossil fish. Their number when thus packed in the soil must have been very great. The largest specimen I obtained appeared to have a small fish in its mouth, as though caught in the act of swallowing its victim. Besides fish, many of the specimens had between the laminæ perfectly preserved leaves and other vegetable matter. When that locality became better known it was visited by many travellers, and the people of the village, finding they could sell the fossils, gathered them up so thoroughly that on my last visit to the place no good specimens could be obtained.

From Hâkil the road led over rough ridges and through deep valleys for about three hours to the large village of Dûma, where I spent two nights and part of three days in the hospitable family of the Greek priest. On the summit of a lofty ridge south of the village some natives were engaged in digging out and smelting iron ore. I was told by them that the work would soon be abandoned, owing to the stifling heat and want of ventilation at the bottom of the deep shaft from where the ore was procured.

Wady Tannûrîn seems to drain the western slopes of Lebanon; where does the little river running through it enter the sea?

This region is called Ard Tannûrîn, but the wady takes different names. Below the village of Tannûrîn it joins Wady ed Duweir, which near the sea bears the name of Wady el Jauzeh. On the north of it are the stupendous cliffs of Jebel en Nûrîyeh. That ridge extends far out into the sea and terminates in a precipitous promontory several hundred feet high. It is called Râs

esh Shŭkah, the famous Theoprosopon, or Face of God, of the ancients, and is the most conspicuous cape on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. As there is no room for a road around the base of that lofty promontory, the highway to Tripoli and the north passes up Wady el Jauzeh for some distance, and then



KŬL'AT EL MUSEILIHAH.

crosses over the cape and down to the plain on the other side. Nahr el Jauzeh rises in Ard Tannûrîn, and the stream below us in Wady Tannûrîn is one of the main branches of that river. El Jauzeh enters the sea a short distance south of Râs esh Shŭkah, and between that point and el Batrûn, the ancient Botrys.

To the north-east of el Batrûn, in Wady el Jauzeh, and where

that valley is exceedingly narrow and completely shut in by towering cliffs, are the ruins of a Saracenic castle, now called Kŭl'at el Museilihah, which was built upon a high and isolated rock, nearly perpendicular on all sides. It commanded the bridge over the stream and the highway, and travellers and caravans were obliged to pay whatever black-mail was levied upon them by lawless native sheikhs who frequently occupied it in former times. The castle has long been in a dilapidated condition, and trees and bushes have grown up among the ruins. I found nothing more formidable about it than a shepherd lad peacefully watching over his flock of black and white goats as they scaled its rocky heights to reach the bushes growing upon the edge of its overhanging cliffs.

From this Wady Tannûrîn the road leads up a long and steep ascent, only to descend again by a difficult and muddy path into a deep ravine. Passing westward along the farthest side of it, we will come to an extensive grove of cedar-trees. There are many hundreds of them, but all are comparatively young and small. They spread over the rocky ridges between the villages of Tannûrîn, Nîha, and el Hadith, about four miles farther north.

This old man from Tannûrîn, who accompanies us as guide, repeats essentially the same story about those cedars that I had heard many years ago. The young trees, he says, have sprung up from the roots of older cedars, cut down by order of the Emîr Beshîr Shehâb to furnish tar and pitch for the British fleet, which was then in this part of the Mediterranean, watching the proceedings of Napoleon Bonaparte in Egypt and Syria.

It is quite unexpected to hear from such an authority here on Lebanon of Napoleon and the English fleet, and of events that occurred in the beginning of this century.

The old man says, also, that other forests have disappeared in a similar manner—for the manufacture of pitch—and that the work of denudation is still going on in these mountains. Whether or not his stories are strictly true, one of them is sufficient to account for the general disappearance of cedar forests on Lebanon.

A few old stumps are still seen amongst these young cedars, yet not enough to prove that this forest sprang from them.

The natives continually cut away the old stumps, to obtain

resinous chips, which make kindling-wood for their fires, and often serve the purpose of an oil-lamp. The account of our guide in regard to the origin of this cedar-grove reminds us of the well-known fact, referred to in the fourteenth chapter of Job, that trees cut down to the roots will often sprout again.

We have come to the end of this cedar-grove, and must now follow our guide northward to el Hadith. Returning from my first visit to the well-known Cedars above Bsherreh, in November, 1834, we were overtaken at el Hadith by a cold and drenching rain; and fearing that it might be the precursor of a snow-storm, which would effectually block up the mountain-passes, we determined to descend to the plain. The road was extremely rough, and the rain made the rocks so slippery that my horse fell several times, and once I was thrown off amongst the stones. Two hours from el Hadith we saw the ruins of a convent, built upon an arch thrown midway across a chasm in a high cliff, two or three hundred feet below its summit, and as many above the torrent at its base. The last occupants, it was said, were robbers, who had been captured and put to death by the Turkish authorities.

After reaching the plain a ride of two hours brought us to Amyûn, where we spent the night. It is the largest village in the Kûrah, a district which extends westward to the sea, and northward to the city of Tripoli. El Kûrah is an irregular plain, somewhat elevated above the sea, having a substratum of cretaceous rock, hard on the surface, and softer beneath. The soil is admirably adapted to the growth of the olive-tree, and the numerous villages situated upon the plain are surrounded by olive-groves, which impart an appearance of life and beauty to what would otherwise be a bare and barren expanse. The river Kadîsha meanders through the Kûrah in a deep and narrow vale, overhung by perpendicular cliffs, which only decrease in height as it leaves the mountains and approaches the sea.

From el Hadith our course changes from north to east, having the stupendous gorge of Wady el Kadîsha far below us on the left. This valley is so deep, and the cliffs on either side so precipitous, that the river at the bottom of it cannot be seen from many points along the road.

I notice several convents upon projecting rocks, and quite a number of churches and villages clinging to the steep and picturesque terraces on the north side of the wady.

This is a sacred region to the Maronites; and the Kadîsha is the holy river, because it rises near the "Cedars of God." Amongst the convents is Deir Kanôbîn, which has a history fifteen hundred years long, and not always very peaceful or Christian. It derives its name from the Greek word for convent, but it has been the seat for many generations of the Maronite patriarch, and the principal summer residence of the present incumbent of that high office. The convent has not essentially changed since the close of the seventeenth century, when Maundrell visited it, and the scenery not at all. His description of it and its surroundings is graphic and exceedingly interesting:

"Its situation is admirably adapted for retirement and devotion, for there is a very deep rupture in the side of Lebanon, running at least seven hours' travel directly up the mountain. It is on both sides exceeding steep and high, clothed with fragrant greens from top to bottom, and everywhere refreshed with fountains, falling down from the rocks in pleasant cascades, the ingenious work of nature. These streams, all uniting at the bottom, make a full and rapid torrent, whose agreeable murmuring is heard all over the place, and adds no small pleasure to it.

"Kanôbîn is seated on the north side of this chasm, on the steep of the mountain, at about midway between the top and the bottom. It stands at the mouth of a great cave, having a few small rooms fronting outwards that enjoy the light of the sun; the rest are all under ground. Kanôbîn had for its founder [in the fourth century] the Emperor Theodosius the Great; and though it has been several times rebuilt, yet the patriarch assured me the church was of the primitive foundation. It stands in the grotto, but fronting outwards receives a little light from that side. The valley of Kanôbîn was anciently, as it well deserves, very much resorted to for religious retirement. You see here still hermitages, cells, monasteries, almost without number. There is not any little part of rock that jets out upon the side of the mountain but you generally see some little structure upon it for the

reception of monks and hermits, though few or none of them are now inhabited."[1] A statement essentially true at present.

The "convent," or Deir Kanôbîn, was the prison, and near it is the tomb of As'ad esh Shidiak, a learned native, and the first Protestant martyr on Mount Lebanon.

It has taken us a little over an hour from el Hadith to reach this beautiful and well-wooded village.

It is called Hasrûn, and is situated on the edge of the precipice overhanging the deep wady of the same name. On the opposite side of the valley is Hadshît; and though the villagers can call to each other across the profound chasm, it takes two hours to pass from one place to the other. An hour farther on we will cross the Kadîsha, and half an hour from there we will enter the lower part of Bsherreh, although its actual distance from Hasrûn as the crow flies is not two miles.

This region is justly celebrated for its exceptional cultivation; every available spot where a handful of earth can be made to produce a blade of wheat or a single vegetable is terraced up and thoroughly irrigated. Besides wheat, barley, Indian-corn, and the cereals and vegetables of this country, the potato is successfully cultivated in the fields along the steep mountain-sides. Patches of tobacco, mulberry gardens, and extensive vineyards climb the mountain heights, surround the villages, and descend into the deep wadys far below, while here and there and everywhere, in little valleys and sheltered nooks, silver-leafed poplars, walnuts, figs, apples, pears, plums, peaches, quinces, and other fruit-bearing trees are seen in all their leafy perfection.

As the road winds along the brink of this gorge of the Kadîsha, with its perpendicular sides over a thousand feet high, we can look down from time to time into its profound depths.

"The gorge," says Dr. Robinson, "is for the most part deeper and wilder than any other in Lebanon. Its great depth, its sides —rocky, precipitous, and dark—closely approaching each other below, and then in some parts gradually sloping off and opening out above; the rich cultivation and exuberant fertility of every spot where earth can be made to lie; the gardens of fruit-trees, the

[1] Early Travels, pp. 502, 503.

mulberry plantations, and the fields of grain and vegetables clothing and adorning its sides, and mingling everywhere with bold, romantic rocks and precipices; the villages, sometimes peeping from among the trees, and sometimes perched picturesquely on the rocks; the convents, thrust into curious remote nooks and inaccessible places, sometimes deep in the valley, and sometimes on the summits of the surrounding mountains—all these presented a scene singularly wild, picturesque, and beautiful."[1]

As we descend into the valley, in order to ford the Kadîsha, purling rills and shooting streams everywhere cross our path and disappear in the depths below, and the scenery in all directions is grand and sublime—the deep gorge and basin; the streams from the sources of the Kadîsha tumbling and foaming along their channels to form the holy river; the convents, the verdure, and the villages; the great wady which, from the bottom to the summit of the mountain, appears only as one unbroken slope; and the magnificent snow-capped range of the Lebanon above the cedars, which forms the amphitheatre in which all are contained — these here combine the beauty and the grandeur of Lebanon.[2]

Bsherreh, on the northern side of the gorge, is a large village, and the houses, rising tier above tier up the mountain-side, give it quite a striking and imposing appearance.

It is surrounded and half concealed by groves of silver-leafed poplar and walnut trees, oak woods, fig orchards, mulberry terraces, vegetable gardens, vines and vineyards; but a near acquaintance reveals the same neglect and squalor which characterize every village on Lebanon. The streets are mere lanes—crooked, narrow, and filthy—winding at random up and down amongst the houses. There are a few shops where the mountaineers procure their supplies of groceries, clothing materials, and other necessaries. We must there replenish our exhausted commissariat, have our horses re-shod, and allow the men time to purchase barley for the animals and supplies for themselves during our stay at the Cedars, and for two days' journey beyond, until we reach Ba'albek.

The holy river is here divided into several streams, and fording them is not so formidable as I had expected.

[1] Rob. Res., vol. iii. p. 597.

[2] Rob. Res., vol. iii. p. 597.

Earlier in the season I have crossed el Kadîsha—with horses and loaded mules—on one of the most primitive of bridges, even in this rural region, constructed by laying trunks of trees across the stream, and placing slabs of stone upon them, covering the whole with thorn-bushes, grass, and earth.

Bsherreh is abundantly supplied with water; and the gardens in its immediate neighborhood, although apparently just clinging to the cliffs below, and climbing the mountain above the village, are very productive. The arable lands are extensive, and yield good crops of wheat, barley, Indian-corn, tobacco, and potatoes. While our men are making their purchases we will pass on and up towards our camping-ground. It will take an hour's steady climbing, over a road steep, rough, and slippery, to reach our destination; but the extensive views obtained as we ascend are certainly amongst the most impressive in this part of Lebanon.

The dark clouds overhead have passed away, and the setting sun fills the gorge of the holy river far below us with its mellow light. Those trees standing like sentinels watching our approach are the advance-guard of the grove under whose solemn and suggestive shadow we propose to pass a quiet Sabbath amongst the far-famed "Cedars of God."

Sunday, September 7th.

I could spend a week here, merely to breathe the cool, fresh air, fragrant with aromatic odors from "the trees of the Lord [that] are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted; where the birds make their nests;" and to enjoy the universal quiet and the solemn grandeur of these venerable patriarchs of the grove, which is so very impressive.[1] Tree and branch and twig and leaf are still and motionless, keeping a Sabbath of reverent rest, and there is nothing to disturb the peacefulness of the place. Even the ravens and crows and the tiny finches seem to glide in and out of the uppermost boughs with unwonted sobriety.

The cedar was pre-eminently the Bible tree, greatly admired and esteemed by the Jews, and its Hebrew name is still preserved in the modern Arabic one, el arz. "To the sacred writers the cedar was the noblest of trees — the monarch of the vegetable

[1] Psa. civ. 16, 17.

kingdom. 'Solomon spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.'[1] To the prophets it was the favorite emblem for greatness, splendor, and majesty; hence kings and nobles, the pillars of society, are everywhere cedars of Lebanon."[2] And to the Psalmist it was the type of increasing prosperity for the righteous: "he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon."[3] The cedar was celebrated in Bible times for its great height. According to Amos the Lord says, "Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars."[4] Isaiah tells us that "the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up."[5] "Sennacherib, king of Assyria," in his pride and arrogance, "reproached the Lord and said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedars thereof."[6] And so Ezekiel represents the Lord as saying, "I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar;" and the same idea is implied in other passages of the Bible.[7]

The cedar had special claims to be regarded with reverence by the Jews, and, owing to its fragrance, its yielding readily to the skilful hand of the artificer, and its durability, cedar-wood appears to have been considered by them as amongst the choicest of woods. It was always present in the palaces of their kings, and may be said to have "assisted" in the worship of God in the Jewish temples. "The king [David] said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains."[8] "Solomon built also the house of the forest of Lebanon, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars, and it was covered with cedar above upon the beams."[9] "Solomon covered the house [the temple of God] with beams and boards of cedar; and the cedar of the house within was carved with knobs and open flowers: all was cedar: the altar was cedar overlaid with pure gold."[10] In the time of Zerubbabel the men of

[1] 1 Kings iv. 33. [2] Rob. Res., vol. iii. p. 591. [3] Psa. xcii. 12.
[4] Amos ii. 9. [5] Isa. ii. 12, 13. [6] 2 Kings xix. 20–23.
[7] Ezek. xvii. 22. [8] 2 Sam. vii. 2. [9] 1 Kings vii. 2, 3.
[10] 1 Kings vi. 9, 10, 15–18, 20.

Sidon and Tyre brought "cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa," as was done in the days of Solomon, to be used in building the second temple "according to the grant that they had of Cyrus;"[1] and Josephus tells us that "the roofs" of Herod's temple "were adorned with cedar curiously graven."[2]

Isaiah leads us to infer that cedar-wood was used in the manufacture of graven images by cunning workmen: that the worshipper of idols "chooseth a tree that will not rot; he heweth him down cedars; he burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire; and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image."[3] That the cedar "will not rot" appears to be confirmed by specimens taken from the most ancient ruins which man has explored. "Fragments of cedar-wood, about three thousand years old, were found in the ruins of Nineveh by Mr. Layard, and are now in the British Museum. They were first supposed to be yew; but a careful microscopic examination made by Mr. Carruthers, with the odor they emitted when burnt, proved it to be cedar-wood."[4]

There is no mention of the cedar-tree in the New Testament.

Simply, I suppose, because our Lord and his disciples had no occasion to allude to it. Nor is it necessary to insist that, in the fifty or more notices found in the Old Testament, reference is always made to the cedar of Lebanon. Evidently it did not grow in the desert, and the cedar-wood mentioned in Leviticus and Numbers was probably a species of juniper.[5] So also the statements in Ezekiel, that masts of cedar were made for the ships of Tyre, may have had reference to exceptional cases, as the ordinary pine of the country was better adapted for such purposes.[6]

The parable of the trees inviting the bramble to rule over them, and the indignant reply, "Let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon"—the allegory of the thistle proposing the marriage of its son to the daughter of the cedar—"and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon and trode down

[1] Ezra iii. 7. [2] Wars v. 5, 2. [3] Isa. xl. 20; xliv. 14, 16, 17.
[4] Hist. of Bib. Plants, p. 123. [5] Lev. xiv. 4, 6, 7; Numb. xix. 6.
[6] Ezek. xxvii. 5.

the thistle"—both, I suppose, are as well adapted to rebuke the proud and pretentious now as they were then.[1]

Alas! flames far more destructive than any "out of the bramble" have devoured "the goodly cedars." "Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars."[2] And not only has the charcoal-burner consumed "the glory of Lebanon" in his smouldering pits, but forked lightning sometimes rends asunder the strongest and shatters the tallest trees amongst them. "The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon."[3] Isaiah tells us that they rejoiced at the fall of Babylon, "saying, Since thou art laid down no feller is come up against us;" yet more barbarous fellers than the hosts of Babylon have raised their Vandal axes against "the cedars of God," not to build and adorn the palaces of kings and the temples of the Lord, but to burn and destroy, and to manufacture into tar and pitch for the navy of a Christian nation.[4]

On some of my former visits to this grove I have found the nights extremely cold, even in the middle of September. Several years ago, in company with a party of ladies and gentlemen—English, Scotch, French, and American—we came here to spend the day of rest. Saturday had been cold, misty, and gloomy, and this grove was enveloped in a dense fog. Sunday morning, however, dawned upon us clear and bright, and the day was one of unalloyed enjoyment, not soon to be forgotten. In the presence of such impressive scenes and scenery conversation seemed almost an impertinence, and the morning was spent in wandering through the grove in silent meditation. Our party dined beneath the verdant canopy of these venerable trees, and, as was natural, the topics of conversation were mostly suggested by our immediate surroundings. As the cedar was pre-eminently a Biblical tree, it was proposed that we form ourselves into a Sunday-school class, the lesson being the Cedars of Lebanon; and we proceeded to search out and read over the passages in the Bible in which they were mentioned, and to compare the ancient with the modern tree.

In order to correspond to the Biblical descriptions, the cedar-

[1] Judges ix. 15; 2 Chron. xxv. 18.
[2] Zech. xi. 1.
[3] Psa. xxix. 5.
[4] Isa. xiv. 8.

EL ARZ—THE CEDARS.



tree should be tall, goodly, choice, excellent; flourishing and abundant, with spreading branches and umbrageous foliage, and of great strength and durability. "The Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. His height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long. Not any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty; so that all the trees of Eden envied him."[1]

"The cedars [of this grove] are not less remarkable," says Dr. Robinson, "for their position than for their age and size. The lofty ridge of the mountain trends slightly towards the east; and then, after resuming its former direction, throws off a spur of equal altitude towards the west, which sinks down gradually into the ridge terminating at Ehden. This ridge sweeps round so as to become nearly parallel with the main ridge, thus forming an immense recess or amphitheatre, approaching the horseshoe form; surrounded by the loftiest ridges of Lebanon [over six thousand feet high and], which rise still [three or four thousand feet] above it, and are partly covered with snows. In the midst of this amphitheatre [on a group of half a dozen small knolls] stand the cedars, utterly alone, with not a tree besides, nor hardly a green thing in sight—['at the apex of the vegetable world'[2]]. The amphitheatre fronts towards the west; and, as seen from the cedars, the snow extends round from south to north. High up in the recess the deep, precipitous chasm of the Kadîsha has its beginning, the wildest and grandest of all the gorges of Lebanon."[3]

Canon Tristram aptly remarks that the general appearance of this grove is of a thick clump, as though it was the rémnant of some ancient forest.[4] The little rocky knolls upon which it stands, and which Dr. Hooker believes to be "old moraines deposited by glaciers," cover but a few acres of the arena enclosed within this vast amphitheatre, and the trees themselves do not exceed four hundred, of all sizes and ages. There is a regular gradation from small and comparatively young trees to the largest and oldest patri-

[1] Ezek. xxxi. 3, 5, 8, 9.
[2] Dean Stanley.
[3] Rob. Res., vol. iii. pp. 590, 591.
[4] Land of Israel, p. 629.

archs of the forest. The large trees are about twelve in number, and have several trunks, dividing into three or more great branches a few feet from the ground. Of those trees some are over forty feet in circumference, others thirty and twenty feet in girth. They are from fifty to eighty feet in height, "with fair branches," and their "shadowing shroud" spreads widely around.

Nothing very satisfactory has yet been ascertained in regard to the age of these cedars, nor are they more ready to reveal it than those who have an uneasy consciousness of "length of days." Very different estimates have been made by botanists and others, varying from eight hundred to two thousand and even three thousand years; but the method of ascertaining their approximate age by counting the growths, or concentric circles, in a section of the trunk does not appear to be very reliable.

Some of these trees are, certainly, very old; they have names and dates of persons known and unknown to fame carved upon their gnarled and knotted trunks many generations ago, and the growth of the tree since then is hardly perceptible.

One cannot look upon these patriarchs of the forest—the glory of Lebanon—without feeling that they are endowed with a species of immortality—their ancient story!—their glory and renown! coming down the ages from "the garden of God"—"the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted"—to the temple of the Lord—from the time of David, Solomon, and Hiram to the days of Zerubbabel and Herod the Great. As they stand now they have stood for many centuries, looking down in tranquil repose upon the ephemeral generations of mankind as they passed on to oblivion; and it is their great antiquity and renown which are their chief glory, and attract so many from all parts of the earth to make "pilgrimages" to this "sacred grove," and to meditate within the mystic circle of its "shadowing shroud."

Wandering through the grove this morning, I noticed, near the south-west part of it, four trees that have become inextricably intertwined. About twenty-five feet from the ground two of them have grown together, and a large branch of the third has passed into and through the trunk of the second tree, near the same place. Twenty feet higher up, a stout limb from the third tree



AN AGED CEDAR OF LEBANON.

has also passed through the second, and, still higher up, a strong branch from it is similarly united with the same tree. Finally, the third tree has become firmly joined to the fourth, and no one of the four could be felled without cutting down all the others.

I suppose that growing together was the result of friction after the several branches had become permanently intertwined. Dean Stanley probably alludes to the same unusual spectacle when he

says: "In one or two instances the boughs of these aged trees are held up by a younger tree; others, again, of the smaller ones, whose trunks are decayed, are actually supported in the gigantic arms of their elder brethren."

The form and shape of the cedar give to it a very striking and graceful appearance. In places where it can grow naturally and freely the tree assumes somewhat the symmetry of its beautiful cone. The branches spread out horizontally from the main trunk, and the lower ones are the longest. These again divide into other boughs, which preserve the same horizontal direction, and so on to the smallest twig; and even the leaves follow the same general arrangement. Climb into one of these trees, and you will see a succession of verdant floors beneath your feet, and similar floors overhead, spreading around the trunk, and gradually contracting their circuit, as you approach the topmost boughs. The cedar-cones stand upon or rise perpendicularly out of that green flooring. Travellers gather and carry them to their distant homes, and they are found in private cabinets more frequently than almost any other memento from the Holy Land.

Forty-five years ago, when visitors and travellers were few and far between, I found hundreds of young trees and shoots springing up from the seeds of the ripe cones, and from the roots of the aged cedars; and an effort was made to protect them from the goats and cattle of the shepherd and the peasant. That, however, was soon abandoned, and during the summer and autumn this grove is overrun by men and animals, and the young cedars are trampled upon and destroyed. This shows that, instead of four hundred, there might be as many thousand trees in the grove, and that the whole of the lofty ridges of Lebanon could again be covered with cedars.

It is some consolation to know that, if this forest of cedar should slowly die out and disappear through the negligence and vandalism of the natives and the ruinous policy of the Turks, the tree itself will not be lost. It has been propagated from seeds in the parks and gardens of Europe, and there are specimens of the cedar in England, I suppose, as fine as these in this "sacred grove" upon the heights of goodly Lebanon.

The wood, bark, cones, and even the slender leaves of the cedar

are "full of sap," as the Psalmist has it, imparting to them their peculiar fragrance and their abiding life; and it was that which rendered cedar-wood valuable, and also imperishable; but, owing principally to the scarcity of the tree, the timber is now rarely used for building purposes in this country.

During most of my former visits a holy quiet seemed to pervade this grove, and I have always regarded it with those feelings of reverence and solemnity which no other spot on Lebanon is calculated to inspire. I am not surprised, therefore, that even to this day it is invested with a religious sanctity by multitudes of Christians. The Maronites of these mountains assemble here in August, and celebrate the Feast of the Cedars under these venerable trees. More than forty years ago, on my second visit to this grove, I heard "mass" performed in a rude and rustic chapel, which has given place to the little edifice lately erected by the poor priest who now solicits aid from travellers for its maintenance and his own support. He complains, and not without reason, of the sad decline of religious zeal in these modern times.

VIII.

THE CEDARS TO HÛRMUL AND BA'ALBEK.

The Summit-level of the Lebanon Range.—The Cedar Mountain.—Jebel Mŭkhmal.—Pass over Lebanon Described by Dr. Buchanan.—Ehden.—Paradisus.—Yûsuf Karam.—Pass around the West End of Lebanon.—Tripolis.—El Mîna.—Small Islands North-west of Tripoli.—The Castle of Tripoli.—Library at Tripoli Burnt during the Crusades.—Burckhardt.—Tarâblus esh Shâm.—Terminus of the Euphrates Valley Railroad.—Ruwâd, Arvad.—Cyclopean Wall.—Alexander the Great.—Tartûs, Tortosa.—Castle and Church at Tartûs.—Bombardment of Tartûs.—Antaridus.—Ancient Quarries.—Idol-temple.—Remains near 'Ain el Haiyeh.—Sepulchral Monuments.—M. Renan.—Marathus.—Arca.—Tell 'Arka.—Temple of Alexander.—The Emperor Severus.—The Holy Lance.—Ruins of Arca.—Tunnel.—Fossil Shells.—Exuberant Verdure and Grand Scenery.—Nahr el Bârid.—Orthosia.—Ruined Temple on Harf es Sphîry.—Dining with the Beg at Sîr.—The Man of Uz.—The Sabbatical River.—Fauwâr ed Deir.—Intermitting Fountains.—Gray Squirrels and Walnut-trees.—Fountain and Overhanging Cliff.—View from the Pass above Sîr.—Cloud-burst.—Homer.—Tydens.—Dislocated Strata.—Wheat and Snow.—Sheepfolds.—'Ain el Beida.—Natives Making Tar.—A Mountain Meadow.—Et Tubbân.—Water-shed.—Wady Fârah.—"Boundless Contiguity of Shade."—'Ain el Ayûn.—Dahar el Kŭdhîb.—A Camp-fire on Lebanon.—Personal Incident at Hŭrmul.—Local Rebellion.—Hŭrmul.—Woodland Scenery on Lebanon Described by Van de Velde.—"The Entrance of Hamath."—Dr. Robinson.—Ribleh.—Pharaoh and Josiah.—Nebuchadnezzar and Zedekiah.—A Dreadful Massacre.—The Camping-ground of Fierce Conquerors.—The Hittites.—The Kheta.—Egyptian Inscriptions.—Rameses II.—M. Ebers.—Battle near Kadesh between the Egyptians and the Kheta.—The "Right Arm" of Rameses II.—Pentaur.—The Iliad of the Egyptians.—"I was alone."—Rameses II. Fighting the Kheta, with Two Lions at his Side.—A Warlike and Powerful People.—The Report of the Spies sent by Moses.—Frequent Communication between Egypt and Syria in Patriarchal Times.—Egyptian Influence in Syria.—Site of Ketesh.—Kedes.—Laodicea.—Tell Neby Mindau.—Lake of Hums or Kedes.—Stone Dam.—Abulfeda.—Canal to Hums.—Rivulets and Corn-fields.—The Fountains of the Orontes Described by Van de Velde.—Neb'a el 'Asy.—The Orontes.—The Monk's Cavern.—Kamû'a el Hŭrmul.—Hunting Scenes Delineated on the Kamû'a.—Outlook over the Plain from the Kamû'a.—The Canal from 'Ain Lebweh to Kâ'a.—Perpendicular Banks above Neb'a el 'Asy.—Râs Ba'albek.—Conna.—Wady Fîkeh.—El 'Ain.—

Ain.—The Water-shed.—A Night in a Bedawin Encampment.—Lebweh.—Lybo.—Saracen and Crusader.—Neb'a Lebweh.—An Oasis in the Desert.—Lake Yemmûneh.—Disappearance of the Water of the Lake.—Ruined Temple at Yemmûneh.—Villages on the Hill-sides, not in the Plain.—Lone Column in the Bŭkâ'a.—Ancient Temple and Rock-cut Tombs at Nahleh.

September 8th.

INSTEAD of following the ordinary road from the Cedars to Ba'albek, we will take a more circuitous course, across the ranges of northern Lebanon, to the source of the river Orontes, near Kamû'a el Hŭrmul, and thence southward, ascending the broad valley between the two ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon to Ba'albek. That route will lead us through regions about which very little is known; but we have only to follow the muleteers, who have already started with a guide for Sîr, where we are to encamp for the night. Our course for the first three hours will be westward along the lofty ridge which comes to an end above the picturesque village of Ehden.

It is evident that our tour to the Cedars has not brought us to the termination of goodly Lebanon.

Far from it. This mountain-range extends at least twenty miles farther to the north-east, and then it descends gradually down to the lower hills of Jebel 'Akkâr, which connect it with the mountains of the Nusairîyeh. The characteristic feature of the range is also changed. From Taum Nîha, on the extreme south, up to this lofty peak east of the Cedars, the summit-level of Lebanon is quite narrow—not more than a mile wide. But from there northward it expands into an elevated plateau at least ten miles broad—a cold, barren, and uninhabited region, fit haunt of bears, wolves, jackals, and other wild animals.

Nothing, certainly, in this country can exceed in grandeur this vast amphitheatre around the Cedars; and the views of the grove, and those of lofty Lebanon towering above it, which we obtain from many projecting points along our road, will never be forgotten.

The range is here called Jebel el Arz, the Cedar Mountain; and the highest peak overhanging the grove is Jebel Mŭkhmal. It is more than ten thousand two hundred feet above the level of the sea—probably the most elevated point of land in all Syria, higher than Sŭnnîn, and even Mount Hermon. To those coming

from Ba'albek to the Cedars the outlook from the top of the pass over them is, perhaps, the most extensive in this region. For about two hours the road winds up the steep mountain-side, affording many fine views of the distant range of Anti-Lebanon and the far-off ruins of Ba'albek; the broad and varied plain of Cœlesyria, and the silvery lake of el Yemmôneh, gleaming in the sunlight; the bleak little village of 'Ainâta, built upon a spur of the mountain, its beautiful grove of walnut-trees almost directly below; and the magnificent and nearly perpendicular sweep of the Lebanon range extending southward far as the eye can follow.

Such is the prospect from the eastern side of Lebanon over the plain of Cœlesyria. The outlook westward from the top of the pass above the Cedars is thus described by Dr. Buchanan: "As we approached the summit of the mountain our path lay over unbroken snow. Never shall I forget, while memory lasts, the magnificence of the view which burst upon us when we suddenly turned the narrow ridge of the mountain. Before gaining this point we had many times turned round to gaze with rapture on the scene we were leaving behind. But grand as that view was, it seemed almost tame and commonplace in comparison with the wonderful and glorious sight that opened upon us when we at length reached the summit of this gigantic mountain wall and looked over to the other side. The range of the Lebanon at this particular point is so narrow as almost to resemble the top of a wall. This singular peculiarity is caused by the immense gash made by the valley of the Kadîsha, which nearly cuts the mountain through.

"We were now standing at the top, and on the very brink of this crevasse, which descends rapidly to the broad and beautiful plain that stretches out from the western base of the mountain to the sea-shore at Tripoli. It is made up of a succession of vast basins or cavities, with sudden breaks or precipices dropping sheer down from one to another, and walled in, all the way down, by mountain heights overhanging this abyss on either hand. The bottom of the uppermost of these large cavities lay about fifteen hundred feet beneath us. Sweeping forward from the point where we stood, the mountain encloses it on two sides, rising at the same time several thousand feet higher above it than at the point where

we stood. We were therefore looking down into this enormous cavity, and away downwards and onwards to the plain and the sea, between these stupendous heights.

"It is amongst these heights the Lebanon attains its loftiest elevation—the cluster of peaks immediately in front of us on the right rising over ten thousand feet above the sea-level, while those on the left are not much lower, and both of them, from their summits down to the vast hollow or cavity between them, exhibited one unbroken mass of dazzling snow. It is necessary to conceive of this foreground in order to form any correct idea of the striking and almost supernatural appearance of the scene which here met our startled and bewildered eyes.

"Light fleecy clouds were sailing across our line of vision from one mountain-side to another. The glorious blue heaven was above our heads. Far down beneath us, at the bottom of the gorge, gleamed [the Holy River] in the bright sunshine, and the plain seemed almost at our feet. [On its outer margin] was Tripoli, shining brightly above the dark foliage of the groves and gardens around it; and there was the sea, as blue as the sky, [rising up to] those fleecy clouds . . . . and there was another expanse of blue [rising above them] to the sky. It was the sea seen at the same moment both below and above the clouds! We stood amidst the snow gazing in a sort of ecstasy on this wonderful and truly glorious scene. The first object that attracted our notice, in a corner of the huge cavity or basin immediately beneath us, was a group of trees—one solitary clump—standing apparently on a floor of gray rock, only a few hundred yards beneath the line of the snow. These were the Cedars of Lebanon."[1]

Our road from the Cedars, though rough and rocky, has been endlessly diversified by distant views of mountain scenery, combining every element of beauty, grandeur, and sublimity. We have had glimpses of the profound gorge of the holy river Kadîsha; have seen, far below and above us, several villages and convents; have crossed green valleys and purling streams; have been refreshed by the waters of cold and sparkling fountains; and have at last, after a pleasant ride of three hours, arrived at this pretty

[1] Notes of a Clerical Furlough, p. 432-434.

village of Ehden, embowered in verdure, and surrounded by vineyards, mulberry terraces, and pine, fig, and walnut trees.

Ehden is about five thousand feet above the level of the sea, and from its advantageous position, on the slope of the mountain at the north-western angle of the great amphitheatre around the Cedars, it commands a magnificent outlook in all directions. It has abundant fountains, substantial houses and churches, and the inhabitants are remarkably enterprising and prosperous. Nor is it entirely unknown to fame: it has been confounded by Maronite monks with the Paradisus of the ancients, and "is said to have been the birthplace of the Maronite scholar, Gabriel Sionita, the editor of the Syrian version in the Paris Polyglot."[1] Formerly it was the seat of a Maronite bishop, and more recently it became the refuge of a Maronite rebel against the Government, Yûsuf Karam, the ruins of whose dwelling are still to be seen in the middle of the village. In the winter this place is buried in deep snow, and those of the inhabitants who can do so then descend to Zŭgharta, a large village on the south side of a fertile valley between the foot-hills of the mountain and the city of Tripoli.

Since leaving Ehden the direction of our ride has changed to the north-east, and from the top of this pass around the west end of the mountain we must bid farewell to the city of Tripoli and that vast expanse of land and sea.

Owing to the great transparency of the atmosphere to-day Tripoli seems to be surprisingly near.

It is at least seven thousand feet below us, and it would take more than nine hours to reach it.

Compared with Tyre and Sidon, Tripoli appears to have but little historic interest, either ancient or modern.

And yet it has long been, and is now, one of the most important towns on this coast. The ancient geographers inform us that it was founded about 700 B.C. by three colonies from Arvad—that little island of Ruwâd, away to the north—Sidon, and Tyre, and that they occupied separate quarters; hence the name Tripolis, triple city. Its Phœnician name is supposed to have been Kadytis, "the holy;" and it is inferred that the river Kadîsha, which

[1] Rob. Res. vol. iii. p. 587.

runs through the town, still preserves the form and significance of that ancient name. It is not mentioned in the Bible, nor even alluded to by classic writers until the times of the Greeks. El Mîna, the harbor, appears to occupy the site of the original town. Tripoli was a member of the Phœnician league, and participated in an unsuccessful revolt against the Persians. In Alexander's time it was a seaport of the first rank, and continued to increase in commercial importance until after the Moslem invasion, when the town was destroyed, and the present city of Tarâblus was founded, about two miles inland, towards the south-east. Tripoli was one of the last cities that surrendered to the Saracens, on the final overthrow of the Frank kingdom in Syria and the Holy Land.

The shore between the mouth of the Kadîsha and the north-western end of the Mîna was defended by a number of square towers. There were originally seven, but one of them has entirely disappeared, and the remaining six are dilapidated and fast crumbling into shapeless ruins. The best-preserved is Burj es Sebâ'a, the lions' tower, so called from a tradition that two lions were formerly visible on a slab over the entrance—probably the shield and arms of Count Raymond of Toulouse. Burj es Sebâ'a is ninety feet long and sixty-six feet wide, and it has seventy granite columns built into its walls. All those towers were probably constructed during the times of the Crusaders. A group of about a dozen small and rocky islands extends into the sea, from el Mina towards the north-west, for several miles. The largest and the most distant is called Sha'îshet el Kâdy; the next is er Rŭmkîn; and the third in number and size is en Nŭkhl, distinguished by a palm-tree, from which the name is derived. It is said that a number of rabbits inhabited it in former times, and that there are ancient remains and several deep wells on another island. Those near the shore are merely ragged rocks, rising only a few feet out of the water, and have nothing remarkable about them.

When the Crusaders besieged Tripoli, in 1104, Count Raymond built the existing castle on the hill, then called the Pilgrims' Mount, at the entrance of the Kadîsha into the plain, in order to protect pilgrims and harass the Moslems. Arab historians relate the story of the burning of a great library, containing over one

hundred thousand volumes, in Arabic, Persian, and Greek, when the city was captured five years after by Baldwin, and Bertram, the son of Count Raymond. A fanatical priest in his train, finding many copies of the Korân in the library, concluded that it contained nothing else, and ordered the entire collection to be burnt. The library was founded by Abu Tâlib, an author of some celebrity; and Moslem writers lament the destruction of so extensive a library, but the historians of the Crusades do not even mention it.

Tarâblus, or modern Tripoli, is often mentioned by Arab writers, who speak with enthusiasm of its wealth and the beauty of its gardens, surpassed only by those of Damascus. Then, as now, it abounded in extensive gardens of orange, lemon, apricot, pear, plum, apple, and other fruit trees; but it is, by way of eminence, the city of roses. "Tripoli is built upon the declivity of the lowest hills of the Lebanon, and is divided by Nahr el Kadîsha into two parts, of which the southern is the most considerable. On the north side of the river, upon the summit of the hill, stands the tomb of Sheikh Abu Nŭsr, and opposite to it, on the south side, the castle, built in the time of the Crusades; this castle has often been in a ruined state, but it has lately been put into complete repair. Many parts of Tripoli bear marks of the ages of the Crusades; amongst these are several high arcades of Gothic architecture, under which the modern streets run.

"In general the town is well built, and is much embellished by the gardens, which are not only attached to the houses in the town, but cover likewise the whole triangular plain lying between it and the sea. Tripoli stands in one of the most favored spots in all Syria, as the maritime plain and neighboring mountains place every variety of climate within a short distance of the inhabitants."[1] "The path leading up either hill [from the river Kadîsha] opens on a brilliant and extensive landscape: of the plain, two miles in width, covered with gardens even to the sea; of the port on the left, with the islands; of the heights of Lebanon behind, and the boundless and beautiful Mediterranean Sea in front—and over all an atmosphere pure, soft, and splendid."[2]

Such was Tarâblus esh Shâm, Tripoli of Damascus, more than

[1] Burckhardt, Travels, p. 163, 164. [2] Carne's Syria, p. 22, 23.

TARÂBLUS—TRIPOLI.



threescore years ago, and such essentially it is at the present day. It is the capital of a military province, the seat of a Greek bishop; contains churches, monasteries, nunneries, an orphanage, one synagogue, and the Female Seminary of the American Mission; it has spacious mosks, with tall minarets, some of which were once Christian churches, and rejoices in ed Derwishîyeh, a monastery of whirling dervishes, picturesquely situated at the foot of the hill, on the left bank of the Kadîsha. I might add much more about Tripoli and its immediate surroundings; but if we loiter along the way until all that could be said is told, our progress would be slow indeed, and the narrative prolonged to weariness.

What is the number of the inhabitants in Tripoli?

About twenty thousand, including six thousand in the Mîna. In Tripoli three-fourths of the population is Muhammedan; in the Mîna the majority is in favor of the Greeks; there are, also, in both places a few Maronites and some Jews. Tripoli has declined in commercial importance, and its trade is not very extensive. It consists mainly in silk, soap, olive-oil, tobacco, oranges, lemons, and even potatoes from the gardens and fields in the neighborhood. Sponges have always been a specialty amongst the exports. They are gathered all along the shore, both to the north and south of Tripoli, by native and Greek divers, who frequently bring up portions of the rock with the sponge still adhering to them. If Tripoli should become the terminus of the Euphrates Valley Railroad, leading from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, and thus connecting Syria with India, its future growth and prosperity would be assured; but it has a formidable rival in Alexandretta, whose harbor is safer, though from Tripoli the grade into the interior would be less difficult.

It will take five hours more to reach our place of encampment, and therefore we must quicken our pace. There is neither village nor human habitation between this and Sîr.

Can you not enliven the loneliness of the ride by giving some account of Ruwâd, the island-home of the Arvadites, far away on the horizon to the north of Tripoli? Since the Arvadite is mentioned in the tenth chapter of Genesis, there must be some remains of special interest upon that island, or in its immediate neighborhood, for it is one of the oldest historical sites in the world.

Except in Genesis x. 18, and 1 Chronicles i. 16, Arvad, the son of Canaan, and the Arvadites, his descendants, are not mentioned in the Bible until the time of Ezekiel, nearly two thousand years later. He places "the inhabitants of Arvad" among the mariners of Tyre, and with its army, who "were upon thy walls round about."[1] Strabo speaks of the island as a rock in the midst of the waves, inhabited by mariners, and he says that the houses were exceedingly lofty, owing, no doubt, to the limited area of the island. We hear little more of Arvad until the time of Alexander the Great, when both the island and the adjacent territory submitted to that conqueror, and its "mariners" assisted in the siege of Tyre. Arvad was an important place, "a city of refuge" for political fugitives, under the Seleucidæ; and it was one of the little kingdoms with which the Romans established friendly relations, and to whose favor they commended the Jews, their confederates, in the time of the Maccabees.[2]

Eventually Ruwâd fell into the hands of the Saracens, who destroyed the city, expelled its inhabitants, and, out of the ruins of their lofty houses and towering palaces, they built the modern castle crowning the highest part of the island. Under the Turks Ruwâd has become a heap of ruins and a barren rock; it has now no commercial or political importance, and its inhabitants, few in number and miserably poor, far from affording a refuge to the fugitive, can hardly protect themselves against the exactions of their oppressors. On my first visit to the island I found the castle and its Turkish appendages occupied by the families of seafaring men — sailors, fishers, and sponge-divers — a maritime population unique of its kind, and numbering about two thousand in all.

The shape of the island is an irregular oval, the longest side being from east to west; but it is very small, not over three-quarters of a mile in circumference, and it was formerly enclosed by double walls, probably of Phœnician origin. On the western side, close to the margin of the sea, are the remains of a high wall built of large bevelled stones, which in size and appearance are Cyclopean, resembling those in the foundations of the temple at Ba'albek. At one place that wall is still more than thirty-five feet

[1] Ezek. xxvii. 8, 11. [2] 1 Macc. xv. 23.

high, and was originally over fifteen feet thick. From isolated blocks and columns, mostly of basalt, I copied seven Greek inscriptions, containing forty-two lines, in a fair state of preservation.

The harbor was made by extending the massive outer wall into the sea at the north-west and south-east angles of the island. The water thus protected was divided into two harbors by a mole constructed of immense stones, and carried a short distance towards the main-land. Cisterns, for the storing of water and other necessaries, and even rooms for dwelling purposes, have been excavated in the rock in many parts of the island; and upon the rain-water collected in those cisterns the present inhabitants mainly depend for their ordinary supply of that indispensable article.

The position of Arvad was much more formidable than that of Tyre, for it is at least two miles from the main-land, and the depth of the sea would have rendered it impossible for even Alexander to deprive it of its insular character, had he desired to do so. As Palætyrus was much larger than the island-city, so the Arvadites had suburbs on the neighboring coast, at Tortosa, and for several miles south of it, far more extensive and of greater interest than anything that could have been erected on their island.

Tartûs, or Tortosa, the ancient Antaridus — situated on the shore to the north-east of Ruwâd, and not directly "opposite," as its name implies—though once a large place, is now reduced to an inconsiderable village of less than two thousand inhabitants, who reside, mostly, within the castle of the old city. That castle was defended on the land side by double walls built of massive bevelled stones, which appear to rest upon their original foundations. The walls had salient towers, and were further protected by a double fosse cut in the solid rock. The one on the outside of the walls is forty feet wide and twelve feet deep; that between the two walls is sixty-three feet wide, and is partly filled up with rubbish. On the side towards the sea the castle had only one wall, which is still in good preservation, having been strengthened along its base by a sloping abutment of large, smoothly-cut stones, probably added by the Romans, to protect it from the action of the sea. The entrance to the castle strikes the beholder with surprise by its great solidity. It is in a projection of the outer wall, near to

and facing the sea, and was formerly reached by a drawbridge across the fosse. The gate opens into a large room with a vaulted or groined roof, and on the keystone of the entrance is a defaced figure deeply cut into it, probably the arms of the Knights of St. John. Crossing the inner fosse and passing through the second wall, the open court of the castle is reached, having on the left a spacious hall one hundred and fifty-five feet long and fifty-six feet wide. The walls were seven feet thick, and the vaulted roof was supported by five clustered columns in the centre of the hall. There were six windows in the front of that hall, and over one of them, carved in relief, is the figure of a lamb, the favorite emblem of the Crusaders, who occupied both the castle and the town.

Some distance to the south-east of the village and outside the walls are the remains of a fine church, in good preservation, having clustered columns, groined arches, and pointed windows, and apparently of the same age and architecture as the hall in the castle. It is now used as a mosk, and a minaret has taken the place of a belfry. Its length is one hundred and thirty feet; its breadth, ninety-three feet; and its height—over sixty feet—must have given it a conspicuous and imposing appearance. When the English fleet bombarded Tartûs in 1840, to dislodge some of Ibrahim Pasha's troops, that church was struck several times, and a cannon-ball was embedded in the western wall over one of the windows.

The history of Antaradus is essentially the same as that of Arvad, for it was colonized by the Arvadites; but during the Crusades the former seems to have been a place of far greater importance than the latter. Although the town was once taken by Saladin, the Crusaders did not abandon the place until after the final defeat of the Franks at the battle of Hattîn.

About an hour from Tartûs, on the right bank of Nahr Amrît, around 'Ain el Haiyeh, and for some distance south of that fountain along the road to Tripoli, there are extensive quarries, an excavated idol-temple, and several sepulchral monuments. The mystery about those quarries is, what became of the immense amount of stone that was cut out of them? The temple—now called el M'abed, the place of worship—consists of a court one hundred and eighty feet long and one hundred and fifty feet

broad, hewn out of the solid rock to an average depth of about ten feet, the south side being the highest. The entrance to the temple was probably from the north, as that side of the court appears to have been purposely cut away. In the middle of the court a portion of the rock remains, about ten feet high and more than fifteen feet square. Upon that stands, facing north, what appears to have been the shrine of the idol. It was constructed of three large stones, one on either side, and one at the back, upon which rests a huge concave block, like a canopy, fifteen feet long, twelve feet broad, and over six feet thick; the whole structure being more than twenty feet high, and embellished with a frieze and cornice similar to those on some Egyptian tombs.

There are ancient remains about 'Ain el Haiyeh—traces of old foundations, ruins of temples, and broken sarcophagi—evidently marking the site of a place of some importance. About a mile south of el M'abed are several singular sepulchral monuments, called el Maghâzil, the spindles. They consist of a pedestal, over fifteen feet square and nearly ten feet high, surmounted by a cylindrical or cone-shaped block from six to fourteen feet in height, upon which was a pyramidal stone, the entire height being more than thirty feet. One of those monuments was ornamented at the base with rude sculptures, apparently of lions; and under all of them there are rock-cut tombs, containing loculil of unusual size.

Standing alone amidst sand-hills and myrtle jungles, nearly a mile south of el Maghâzil, is a very striking mausoleum, called Burj el Buzzâk, the snail's tower. At the base it was about thirty-one feet square, above the base nearly twenty-eight feet square, and the entire monument was almost an exact cube, the height being a little more than thirty feet. It was divided into two stories, consisting of one chamber in each, and finished off with a cornice, above which there may have been a pyramidal stone. Burj el Buzzâk was constructed of massive blocks, some of which are nearly fifteen feet long and about eight and a half feet broad, and the floor and roof of the chambers were composed of two immense slabs, four feet thick. The top of the monument was reached by a staircase ascending from the inside. M. Renan, in his "Mission en Phénicie," has described and illustrated those curious sepulchral

monuments, and he supposes that the ruins in the neighborhood of 'Ain el Haiyeh are of Phœnician origin.

The region around the quarries at 'Ain el Haiyeh is called Ard Amrît by the natives, and Amrît may be the Arabic form of the Greek, Marathus, the name of a town and colony founded by the Arvadites, the great-grandsons of Noah.

Our road, since leaving that lofty stand-point on Lebanon overlooking the plain of Tripoli and the great western sea, led us along a narrow ledge of hard, smooth rock, and then descended into a deep ravine, densely wooded, on either side, with a great variety of forest trees—oaks of several kinds, sycamores, cypress, juniper, and terebinth trees, and a number of thorny bushes, including the barberry and the omnipresent blackberry—a region so wild and uninhabited that only wolves, panthers, and bears are seen there. The nature of the country west and north of us is extremely rough and rocky, especially around the source of the short river of 'Arka, which enters the sea about fifteen miles north-east of Tripoli. That pretty little stream gets its name from a village near the ruins of Arca, a Phœnician city, originally founded by the Arkites, the descendants of Canaan's seventh son, according to the record given in the tenth chapter of Genesis.

Tell 'Arka, the acropolis of the old town, is situated above the plain, about four miles from the sea. It is about a mile in circumference, of solid rock at the base, but the upper part was artificial. The sides were quite steep, rising to more than a hundred feet, and the top was flat, covering an area of nearly three acres. The city, built upon a terrace overlooking the Mediterranean, lay around the east, north, and west sides of the tell. The river comes rushing down from the heights of Lebanon east of the tell. Leaping down the mountain-side, tumbling over the rocks and darting through deep ravines, it sweeps by the precipitous side of the tell, and, passing under a bridge of a single span, forces its way through a rocky channel out on to the plain and thence to the sea.

After the mention of the Arkite in Genesis x. 17 nothing is definitely known of the history of Arca until about the time of Vespasian and Titus, when the city was also called Cæsarea of Lebanon; and there appears to have been a temple there, dedicated

to Alexander the Great, in which annual festivals were held in his honor. Josephus intimates that Titus passed by Arca, on his way to Antioch, after the destruction of Jerusalem.[1] The emperor Alexander Severus was born in the temple at Arca, and received his name from that circumstance. Arca was the seat of a Christian bishop, and in the fifth century was subordinate to Berytus. Afterwards it fell into the hands of the Saracens, and in the beginning of the twelfth century was an important fortress, capable of resisting all the efforts of the Crusaders to get possession of it.

It was at Arca, while the army of the Crusaders was encamped before the place, that the dispute occurred regarding the genuineness of the holy lance, with which it was said the Saviour's side had been pierced, and which had been discovered at Antioch by Peter Bartholomew, a priest of Marseilles, and intrusted to the custody of Count Raymond of Thoulouse. As visions and denunciations could not dispel the doubts of the multitude, Peter resolved to submit to the trial or ordeal by fire. That quieted the camp. A fire was kindled on the plain, and Peter, taking the holy lance in his hands, passed through the flames apparently unscathed. But the multitude, in their reverence of Peter, rushed upon him to touch the cross, tore off his clothes for relics, and might have killed him, had not Count Raymond with his guard come to his rescue. The deluded Peter died twelve days after, either from the effects of his burns or his bruises, or both, upbraiding those who had persuaded him to make the dreadful trial.

The fatal result of that ordeal discouraged the people and their leaders, and after a siege of two months, perceiving that they could not capture Arca, they burnt their camp and proceeded on their way to the Holy City. After the fall of Tripoli, Arca surrendered to Count William of Cerdagne, and since then it has been taken and retaken by Saracen and Crusader, Egyptian and Turk.[2]

The ruins of the old town are not extensive, and are found mostly on the north side of the tell. They consist of ordinary-sized building-stones, with here and there amongst the heaps the fragments of a granite column. The temple of Alexander stood on the south-eastern side of the tell, where the rock is perpendicular.

[1] B. J. vii. 5, 1.

[2] Rob. Res. vol. iii. p. 578–581.

Its columns have been either shaken down the precipice by the earthquake which destroyed the town in the thirteenth century, or they have been thrown down by the equally destructive Saracen and Turk. I counted sixty-four lying on the bank of the river, one-third of which are of red Syenite, the rest of gray granite.

High up in the face of the perpendicular rock, above which the temple stood, is a horizontal tunnel, supposed to lead under that edifice. A stream of water must have passed through that tunnel and fallen into the river, as is apparent from the tufaceous deposit upon the rock below. The canal which now conducts the water to the mill, near the bridge, and which is tunnelled through a spur of the mountain, may have been originally designed to convey water to the temple and the city. A short distance above the bridge, on the south side of the river, is a perpendicular cliff of white calcareous sandstone, in which recent shells are thickly mingled, and in as perfect preservation as when they were cast up on the sea-beach. I collected a number of pectens, cardiums, and venuses. The dip of that formation is towards the sea.

The village of 'Arka is a mean little hamlet, built upon the ruins of the old town to the east of the tell, and occupied by a few families of Christians and Moslems, miserably poor and degraded.

The mountain ridges around Sîr are limestone, but much of the intervening soil is volcanic, very black, and surprisingly fertile. Here is Neb'a Sîr, near the south side of the village, and, though this is the dryest season of the year, the fountain is sending forth a powerful stream, driving the primitive wheels of those flouring mills, only a few rods from its source.

In no part of the country have we seen the trees—oaks, pines, poplar, walnut, and mulberry—so large and flourishing.

The cause of this exuberant growth is obvious enough—water, water everywhere, and plenty of it.

The natural scenery above and below the village is extremely wild and picturesque, and on a scale so grand that it would require a day to ride around this vast amphitheatre.

From the towering cliffs of Lebanon, which have an elevation of at least nine thousand feet above the level of the sea, the whole of this mountainous region about Sîr breaks down rapidly towards

the plain. Four great and deep ravines descend from the north-western end of that "goodly" range, and their streams, uniting below Sîr, form Nahr el Bârid, the cold river, which goes tumbling and foaming in its rocky channel down to the plain, about three thousand feet below the village. On the south side of Nahr el Bârid, above the khân, and about two miles from the sea and eight miles north of Tripoli, there are some ancient remains of an extensive city, probably those of Orthosia, mentioned in 1 Maccabees xv. 37, as the place to which Tryphon fled when besieged by King Antiochus in Dora, the modern Tantûra, south of Mount Carmel.

On a former occasion, having pitched my tent amongst these oak-trees east of "the palace," where we are now encamped, I called upon Khŭdar Beg, the governor of this district. After the usual compliments, the sipping of coffee, and smoking of pipes, I requested the Beg to let me have a guide to the ancient temple called Hŭsn es Sphîry, from a small village of that name near it. The Beg declared that it was impossible to go there and return that afternoon, but finally he ordered a rough old trooper to mount his horse, and we set off immediately.

We descended at once into a rough and narrow path, muddy and slippery, and overhung with briers and thorn-bushes. It took an hour to ride down to the bottom of that ravine, where we crossed Nahr el Bârid. The ascent on the opposite side was long and steep, but after an hour and a quarter's hard climbing we reached the temple. It stands on the summit of a limestone ridge, called Harf es Sphîry, which commands a prospect over a vast and varied region, including the north end of Lebanon, the long, billowy ranges of Jebel 'Akkâr, the Nusairîyeh mountains, farther north, and the plain to Sâfîta, Tartûs, and the island of Ruwâd. And over the top of the eastern ridges I saw the plain of Hums and Hamath, stretching away to the north-east and onward into the sandy desert farther than the eye could follow.

The walls of the temple were nearly perfect, and, though well built of beautifully white and intensely hard limestone, there was very little ornamentation about them; and an inscription over one of the entrances to the temple was the only evidence of its Greek origin. Amongst the ruins there were two or three small columns,

but they had no capitals, and the design of a few adjoining buildings was not easy to determine, as our time was limited, and we were obliged to hurry off without sufficiently examining the temple or the ancient remains in its neighborhood.

Long before we got back to the village it became quite dark, and much of the ascent was beset with difficulties and dangers, appreciated only by those who have learned from experience what risks they run who ride up such mountain roads late at night. On reaching the tent I found a slave waiting for me with a lantern; he had been sent to conduct me to "the palace," where I was expected to dine with the Beg. There is but little social distinction observed at such feasts in the old feudal halls of this country, especially in such out-of-the-way places as Sîr. All, from the Beg and his brothers down to the humblest of his retainers, partook of the same meal, and in the same way, without any plates, and using their fingers instead of knives and forks or spoons.

In the main hall or reception room a large, low, circular table, without any cloth, was covered with bowls filled with mutton, chicken, and vegetable stews, leben, olives, and pickles; there were also copper trays placed at intervals around the centre of the table, filled with rice, burghul, kibby, and roast lamb, torn in shreds, and swimming in a sauce of butter and onions. Twenty-five persons sat round the table, with nothing but the mat or a carpet under them, and each had at his right hand half a dozen loaves of thin bread. All ate rapidly and voraciously, and each guest sprang up as soon as he was satisfied to give place to another, who immediately took the vacant seat without waiting for an invitation. After leaving the table, water was poured upon the hands of each guest from the same brass pitcher and over the same ewer; and to each a cup of coffee was handed and a pipe offered, though it was expected that some would smoke their own tobacco.

Fifty or sixty men thus dined in about half an hour, after which the dishes were removed to the harem, and the women and children were obliged to content themselves with the remains of the feast. It would take a large income to feed so many hungry retainers, but of course the Beg does not provide such a dinner as that every night. It was intended to honor the guest, and not without

a desire to impress him with the splendid hospitality of the house of Ră'ad. The Kâdy of the district took pains to acquaint me with the antiquity, wealth, and power of that family, all of which of course I accepted upon such impartial testimony. But an air of dilapidation and appearances of unmistakable poverty about "the palace" and its belongings were calculated to suggest serious doubts in regard to the accurate details of the family history and the available resources of its hospitable representative.

Seeing the successive groups of hungry retainers gathered about the Beg's round table, I thought of that famous Emîr in the land of Uz called Job, and of his solemn protestations: "If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof, then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade."[1] We must pay our respects at "the palace" before night comes on, and secure a guide for to-morrow, for though I have crossed over the mountain eastward to Kamû'a el Hŭrmul, I would not venture to do it again without taking a competent native to show us the way.

Sîr, September 8th. Evening.

Having completed our arrangements for to-morrow, I would like to know something about the "Sabbatic River" which Josephus alludes to in connection with the journey of Titus through Syria. I have hitherto regarded it as altogether mythical, but it actually exists, it seems, and still keeps up its irregular flow.

That of the Jews is, indeed, sufficiently apocryphal, but the one mentioned by Josephus is not. He says that Titus, on his way from Berytus to Antioch, "saw a river as he went along, of such a nature as deserves to be recorded in history. It runs in the middle between Arcea, belonging to Agrippa's kingdom, and Raphanea. It hath somewhat very peculiar in it, for when it runs its current is strong and has plenty of water; after which its springs fail for six days together and leave its channel dry, as any one may see; after which days it runs on the seventh day, as it did before, and as though it had undergone no change at all; it hath also been observed to keep this order perpetually and exactly, whence it is that they call it the Sabbatic River, that name being taken from

[1] Job xxxi. 16, 17, 22.

the sacred seventh day among the Jews."[1] Pliny also refers to the same river, though he makes it rest every seventh day, according to the injunction in the fourth commandment.

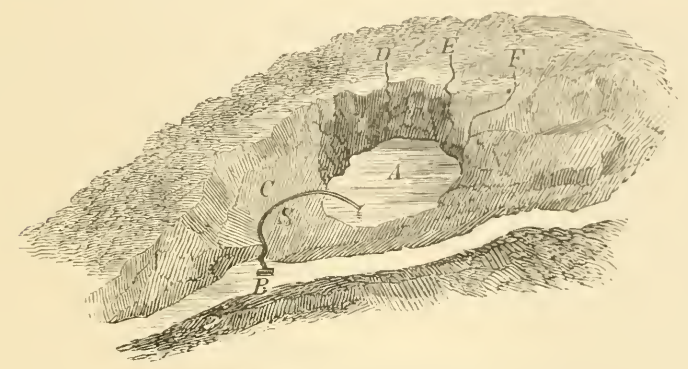
Josephus locates the Sabbatical River between Arcea and Raphanea. Arca, the capital of the Arkites, is at Tell 'Arka, north-east of Tripoli, and between it and Hamath, on the east of Jebel 'Akkâr, is the site of Raphanea, near the ruined castle of Bârîn. North of Tell 'Arka, and a short distance west of Kŭl'at el Husn, is the convent of Mâr Jirjis el Humeira, and in the wady below it is a fountain called Fauwâr ed Deir, from which flows at intervals a sufficient volume of water to entitle the stream in this country to the name of a river. The site accords with the description given by Josephus, and there I discovered the "Sabbatic River" in 1840; but the fountain is now said to be quiescent two days, and active on a part of the third day only.

The account which the monks gave me of the actual phenomenon was, that every third day St. George, their patron saint, descends into the fountain and forces the water out with a loud noise, to irrigate the extensive plantations of that rich Syrian convent. It was a day of rest for the fountain when I examined it, but evidently a considerable quantity of water had flowed along the channel of the river a few hours before. The cave out of which the river issues is at the base of a hill of limestone involved in a formation of trap-rock, and it is well known that subterranean reservoirs of water are sometimes drained by intermitting fountains acting upon the principle of the siphon.

A very simple diagram will illustrate the phenomenon. Let A in the diagram represent such a reservoir, filled by the veins D E F. Let S be the siphon, which, of course, must begin at the bottom of the pool, rise over the elevation at C, and end in the wady at B —lower than the bottom of the pool. Now, the condition necessary to cause the stream to intermit is, that the capacity of the siphon be greater than the supply from D E F. If the supply were greater, or exactly equal to that capacity, the pool would be always full, and there could be no intermission. The periods of intermission and the size of the stream depend upon the capacity of the

[1] B. J. vii. 5, 1.

pool A, the supply from D E F, and the calibre of the siphon S. If it required six days for D E F to fill the pool, and the siphon could exhaust it in one, we have the conditions required by the statement of Josephus—a river running only on the seventh day.



INTERMITTING FOUNTAIN.

On the other hand, if D E F fill the pool in one day, and their continued supply is so nearly equal to the draining power of the siphon that it requires six days to draw off all the water, then it will run six days, according to Pliny, and rest on the seventh. Now the supply, it is supposed, fills the reservoir in about two days and a half, and the siphon drains it off in half a day.

I suppose the Sabbatical River always had nearly the same volume of water in it as the stream below the convent of Mâr Jirjis has at the present day, and that its stated periods of intermission were as irregular then as they are now. The love of the ancients for the marvellous, and a desire to conform that natural phenomenon to the Jewish division of time, will sufficiently account for the inaccuracies of Josephus and Pliny.

Sîr, September 9th.

Our guide has come, and, as we are to ride to-day for ten hours through a wild and uninhabited region, sometimes without any visible road or distinct path, we had better be in the saddle. Our course will be due east, and for the first hour the ascent is gradual, winding about amongst large walnut-trees and across extensive fields of Indian-corn.

This scenery is singularly beautiful, and these bushes are full of birds; and gray squirrels run from tree to tree, and leap from branch to branch, just as they do in other lands far away.

They are enjoying their favorite food, walnuts and green corn, of both of which there is here an abundant supply. We are about to pass away from the grateful shade of this leafy grove, and a steady climb up the mountain for another hour will bring us to the source of the main branch of the river Bârid. The fountain bursts out at the base of a gigantic cliff, and the stream, rushing through large heaps of débris and between fragments of great rocks that have fallen from the overhanging cliff, plunges immediately into a narrow chasm, down which it leaps, in noisy cascades, one after another, falling at least four thousand feet in a very few miles, before it reaches the plain far below.

The cliff is called Ijr el Kŭl'ah, the foot of the castle, and it breaks sheer down from the northern extremity of the Lebanon range at least five hundred feet in perpendicular descent, thus abruptly cutting off Lebanon from the confused mass of mountains lower down and farther north. The top of the pass, above the fountain, is about eight thousand feet above the sea, and, as we rise higher and higher, the views westward over Sîr, and the plain of 'Akkâr, beyond and below it, are continually changing in character and expanding into the distance, until their variety seems endless and their extent almost limitless. The point beyond Tripoli is nearly due west, and an imaginary line drawn from there eastward would pass near Hŭrmul, the village where we intend to encamp, and which we expect to reach to-night.

A few days before my first ascent of this pass a cloud had burst over the cliff above the fountain, and the flood was so great that it not only washed out deep channels in the mountain, but it also overwhelmed many vineyards and corn-fields in its destructive course. Such cloud-bursts, called seil by the Arabs, are not unknown in other countries, for even Homer must have derived some of his vivid descriptions of martial combat from the suddenness and violence of their devastations. The merciless rage and onslaught of Tydeus on the field of battle is compared to the overpowering floods of such a seil, when

> "From high hills the torrents swift and strong
> Deluge whole fields and sweep the trees along;
> Through ruined moles the rushing wave resounds,
> O'erwhelms the bridge, and bursts the lofty bounds.
> The yellow harvests of the ripened year
> And flattened vineyards one sad waste appear."

The last two lines describe exactly the direful results of the seil at the north end of Lebanon as I afterwards saw them.

This pass over Lebanon is not across a sharp ridge, like most of the others, but along a broad depression, evidently caused by volcanic action. It will take three hours to ride through it, and we shall have lofty cliffs on our right and large snow-banks in the sheltered ravines. The volcanic formation over which our pathway winds appears to have been driven up from below like a wedge, and with such force as to split asunder the limestone strata and scatter the fragments northward for several miles, piling them upon each other in the wildest confusion. In that outburst the strata have been dislocated, bent, and overturned in the most extraordinary manner. In one place they have been jammed inward like the dog-eared leaves of an ill-used school-book, and the superincumbent mass has been tilted over southward, contrary to the ordinary dip of the strata in this region, which is generally downwards towards the plain of el Bŭkâ'a.

We have now reached the highest part of this long pass, nearly nine thousand feet above the level of the sea. In some places the young wheat, sown by the peasants from Sîr, is already quite green, and waiting for the coming snow to cover it up and protect it from the cold in winter. This road is then buried under deep snow-drifts and rendered impassable until the spring.

Scattered over this region are many sheepfolds, made with the branches of trees that abound on the mountain; there the shepherds abide with their flocks by night while spending the hot months of summer in these lofty regions. And there they breathe the purest air and drink the ice-cold water which trickles down from the melting snow-banks. Now those sheep-folds are deserted; but no tent-life in this country is so romantic as that isolated, open-air existence of the shepherd, roaming all day over these mountains

with his flocks, and protecting them from savage beasts and thieving men through the long, starry nights of summer.

Apparently this is the highest, dryest, and most lonely pass in the country. We have not crossed a single stream nor passed a solitary wayfarer during this morning's ride of nearly five hours.

There is a small fountain near by, called 'Ain el Beida, which, our guide says, furnishes the only drinkable water between it and Hŭrmul; there we will rest and lunch.

Several paths cross each other at 'Ain el Beida. One descends Wady Sîry and leads northward to a ruined town near the headwaters of Nahr 'Akkâr. Another goes south-east to Ba'albek, and a third—the continuation of the one we have followed—will take us eastward to Hŭrmul, which is still more than five hours distant.

That long ridge on the left of our path appears to be covered with a dense forest of pine-trees.

Riding over this region on another tour, I went out of my way to reach it, in order to examine the process of making tar and pitch, in which some natives were then engaged. They build conical furnaces, which, after being filled up with resinous wood, they cover with earth. The wood is then ignited, and the smouldering fire consumes it very slowly. The rosin trickles to the bottom, and is drawn off into vessels. It is then boiled, to reduce it to the consistency of tar and pitch. Those pitch-burners, with their faces, hands, feet, and garments besmeared with tar and blackened by smoke, were a most savage-looking set. They glared upon me with bloodshot eyes through the lurid light of their smouldering furnaces, and shouted after me in a most hideous manner as I rode away from that Tartarean region.

For the next two hours we must pass over a sterile plateau, having nothing of any interest upon it. Far away to the south stretches a long, broad valley or marshy plain, called Merj 'Ahîn, the meadow of 'Ahîn, in which many small pools are visible. It resembles in general appearance the valley or plain about Lake Yemmûneh, although there are more trees in that valley and upon the mountain and hills adjacent to the lake. In many parts of this unproductive plateau over which we have been plodding nothing seems to flourish except hundreds of small, round, spiny shrubs

called tubbân. At a distance they look like hedgehogs or porcupines. They are found elsewhere on the highest parts of Lebanon, and when the clumps are green and the spines tipped with pale pink flowers, they are quite pretty.

We have now passed the water-shed of this region and entered a wady which descends gradually eastward to the base of the mountain near Hŭrmul. It is overshadowed by large oak-trees, but is destitute of fountain or stream, cultivated land or human habitation.

To relieve the dreary monotony of this interminable wady I will give you an account of a trip through a parallel valley, called Wady Fârah, a few miles south of this one, with which memory associates some pleasant experiences. Our party had spent a rather anxious night below Mŭghârat er Râhib, the monk's cavern, near the source of the Orontes, and, after examining both those remarkable places in the morning, we followed the windings of Wady Lebweh southward for an hour. Crossing to the west side of it, we entered Wady Fârah and began the ascent leading towards the pass over the mountain above the Cedars. We soon found our path overshadowed by wide-spreading oaks and other evergreen trees, and the ascent was very gradual and continuous until we reached the surprising elevation of seven thousand feet.

In all that ride of six hours there was not a house or cultivated field to be seen; we met no wayfarer, nor could we obtain a drop of water. But the lofty ridges on either side of the valley were covered with a dense forest, "a boundless contiguity of shade," which made the ride very enjoyable. Red-legged partridges kept up a continuous cackling and calling on all sides, and gray squirrels ran from tree to tree and hid themselves amongst the thick branches. The Nimrods of the party had many a scramble up and down the mountain-sides, hoping to add variety to our bill of fare in the evening, but the game was extremely wary and wild. Issuing, towards evening, from that long and lonely valley, we encamped in a broad depression called Wady el 'Ayûn, on the side of a green meadow, and just above a purling rill of ice-cold water. 'Ain el 'Ayûn, the source of that little stream, was a short distance above our tents, and it well deserves its name—the Fountain of fountains—for there is none higher, or purer, or colder in that region.

Wady el 'Ayûn abounds in springs, the water from which collects in the lower valley into small pools and miniature lakes, like those in Merj 'Ahîn. Dahar el Kŭdhîb, one of the highest peaks of Lebanon, towers up to the sky for at least two thousand five hundred feet above Wady el 'Ayûn, and directly below that lofty summit, on the western slope of the mountain, are the Cedars. There was something sublime in the utter solitude of such an encampment, so high and so shut in by the majestic range of Lebanon.

As the shadows on the mountains lengthened and the darkness in the valley deepened the air became quite cold. The muleteers climbed the steep side of the mountain, and, with their long ropes, dragged down whole trees—roots, trunk, and branches—which had been blown over by the storms of winter, and were as dry as tinder. These they piled up in front of the tents and set them on fire. The crackling and roaring of the flames; the lurid blaze of such a conflagration; the lights and shadows on tents and tourists, mules and muleteers; the volumes of white and black smoke, rising high into the air—the scene and the situation all combined to make a picture of one of the most romantic night encampments I had ever witnessed even in this land of the ancient patriarchs.

We were obliged to keep up that camp fire all night; and in the morning we found that the dew had frozen the roofs and walls of the tents as stiff as boards, and small fires were kindled in them before they could be taken down. Frost sparkled on the grass, and the little pools in the valley gleamed with a thin coating of ice. Altogether the experience of that night and morning were decidedly exceptional to the traveller in this country, and the cold continued all the following day, and the next night at the Cedars was far from being a comfortable one.

In another hour we shall reach our tents, pitched under the large walnut-trees below and south of the village of Hŭrmul. On my former ride over this road it began to grow dark after leaving this point where we are now, and the guide led us down a steep and rocky path to the south-east, to avoid entering the village. The tents had just been pitched, when some Mutawâly horsemen came galloping up, shouting in a most belligerent style. At first they were very insolent, but when told who we were they apolo-

gized and retired, saying that they had mistaken us for a detachment of Turkish cavalry sent against them from Hums.

The next morning we learned that the inhabitants of that district had rebelled against the Governor of Hums, and that the sheikhs had gathered together at Hŭrmul all their roving and lawless retainers, expecting an attack from the irregular cavalry in the employ of the Government. Their families had been sent to the mountains, and the men were prepared either to fight or run away, as the exigencies of the case might demand. Early in the forenoon an agent arrived from the Governor with conditions of peace, and, while the contracting parties were arranging the terms of submission, we improved the opportunity to visit the village.

Hŭrmul probably occupies an ancient site, and it has been a much larger place in former times. It is now the last village in this direction belonging to the Government of the Lebanon. It is prettily situated high up the slope of this natural amphitheatre; and the houses are divided into several clusters by narrow ravines, through which little streams come tumbling down into the valley. The land around it is very fertile, owing to the abundance of water; and the silver-leaved poplar, the walnut, pomegranate, and other fruit-trees growing in and about the village, give it a very picturesque appearance. But the lawless Mutawâly who inhabit it would soon convert Paradise itself into a frightful wilderness, and Hŭrmul is becoming more and more dilapidated.

Hŭrmul, September 9th. Evening.

Lieutenant Van de Velde gives a graphic description of the woodland scenery in this vicinity, and becomes quite enthusiastic over its park-like nature. He thus writes to his friend: "Much already have I said to you about Lebanon and its glories. Yet between Hŭrmul and the Cedars I saw still more of Nature's beauties, and these, too, of quite a different kind from what I had seen in the more southern mountain-ranges at Jebâ'a or Jezzîn. From Hŭrmul our path began immediately to rise, and brought us ere long into a high-situated valley, which had been transformed into a magnificent park by Nature alone, without any assistance from the hand of man. I was delighted with the picturesque groups of oaks, the fantastically-shaped terebinths, the oddly-twisted stems and

branches of other trees, in which were blended together all sorts of green, pale, dark-yellowish, or sometimes inclining to brown.

"At other points, again, the road led over rocky plateaus, grown over with short, prickly shrubs. Alternating with these there appeared at other places cypress groves [Juniperus excelsa], where each several tree was in itself a study for the landscape painter, some on account of their enormous stems and branches, others on account of their trunks having been broken by storms or being half decayed with age; and others, too, on account of the bright verdure of the shoots here and there springing up from a piece of root apparently dead and partially torn out of the ground. Would you see trees in all their splendor and beauty, then enter these wild groves, that have never been touched by the pruning-knife of art, where neither branches nor stems are ever bent into rectilinear forms, and where the dead wood is never removed from amidst the living. Come up into Mount Lebanon, and then tell me if you ever had an idea of such natural groves as are exhibited by the elevated valleys of this mountain-range."[1]

Was not "the entrance of Hamath" in this neighborhood?

That familiar Biblical phrase indicated a well-known place—a pass or opening leading into the territory of Hamath. In marking out the boundaries of the Hebrew "inheritance in the land of Canaan," Moses says: "This shall be your north border: from the great sea ye shall point out for you mount Hor: from mount Hor ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath; and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad."[2] The spies sent by Moses to explore the land extended their search "from the wilderness of Zin [in the south] unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath;" and that part of the country in this direction not subdued by Joshua, when he "was old and stricken in years," and which never came into the actual possession of the Hebrews, is thus described: "All Lebanon toward the sunrising, from Baal-gad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath."[3]

From those and other incidental notices in the Bible it is evident that, if Mount Hor be identified with Lebanon, or a conspicu-

[1] Syria and Palestine, vol. ii. p. 474, 475.

[2] Numb. xxxiv. 7, 8.

[3] Numb. xiii. 21; Josh. xiii. 5.

ous peak at the northern extremity of that range, then "the entrance of Hamath" would have been north or east of it, and Zedad still farther off in the latter direction. Between the ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, as they gradually terminate in the plain some distance south of Hamath, there is a long, undulating, and comparatively narrow tract connecting the plain of Cœlesyria with that which opens up towards Hamath; and to the south-east of it, on the other side of Anti-Lebanon, is Sŭdŭd, the ancient Zedad, and far away to the south-west is "Baal-gad under Mount Hermon." That undulating region has generally been considered as the Biblical "entrance of Hamath," and to the spies, coming up the plain of Cœlesyria, from the south, it would have presented such an appearance. Dr. Robinson supposes that "the entering in of Hamath" "was at the northern extremity of Lebanon, and that this became a geographical name for the great interval or depression between the northern end of Lebanon and the Nusairîyeh mountains;" and he is probably correct.[1]

From the hill-side above Hŭrmul the ample corn-fields of Ribleh are seen, extending about ten miles to the north-east, and beyond them spreads the vast plain towards Sŭdŭd, and far away eastward until it is lost in the sandy desert around Palmyra.

A Riblah is mentioned by Moses as being on the north-east border of the Promised Land.[2]

That is the place; and the name has remained unchanged from that day to this. Nothing more is heard of Riblah after that for almost eight hundred and fifty years, and then we learn that "Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates;" and on his way he slew Josiah king of Judah at Megiddo, and put Jehoahaz his son "in bands at Riblah."[3] There also Nebuchadnezzar established his camp when he came up against Jerusalem. The princes of the king and the army of the Chaldees went on, and when they had captured the king of Judah "they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him. Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes:

[1] Rob. Res. vol. iii. p. 568, 569.

[2] Numb. xxxiv. 11.

[3] 2 Kings xxiii. 29–33.

also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah. Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon."[1]

A dreadful massacre, and a most dismal doom! What was there about Riblah that induced those terrible invaders to select it for the camping-ground of their vast and merciless armies?

At modern Ribleh there are now only a few wretched peasants' houses, situated on the east bank of the Orontes, and no important remains save the ruins of an ancient square tower, called el Kenîseh, the church. But no better location for a temporary camp could have been chosen in that region by those fierce conquerors of old than Ribleh. By the side of a never-failing stream, with rich corn lands around it, everywhere well watered, it can furnish ample means of subsistence for the largest of armies; and, from its central position, military expeditions could be sent in all directions—eastward to "Tadmor in the wilderness;" southward to Damascus, or through Cœlesyria to Jerusalem; westward, by the low pass near Kŭl'at el Husn, to the sea-coast of Phœnicia, and thence to Egypt, and northward across "the land of Hamath" and beyond "the river Euphrates" into the kingdom of Assyria.

The last time I was here I obtained a guide and guard from the Governor's agent and set off over a beautiful country, sinking gradually to the plain, to visit the lake of Kedes, near which the chief city of the Hittites is supposed to have been situated.

That name is eminently Biblical, and even patriarchal, and it is quite unexpected to hear of that ancient people as formerly residing in this distant and little known region.

Very little information about the Hittites can be obtained from the Bible, both before and after the conquest of the Promised Land. They were called "the children of Heth," the second son of Canaan, and the great-grandson of Noah, and in Abraham's day they were settled in the south of Palestine. It was of "Ephron the Hittite" that Abraham purchased "the cave of Machpelah" at Hebron, when Sarah his wife died.[2] Esau married two of the daughters of the Hittites, "which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah;" and, lest Jacob should follow the example of his erratic

[1] Jer. xxxix. 1–7.

[2] Gen. x. 15; xxiii.

brother, and "take a wife of the daughters of Heth," they "sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence."[1]

On the return of the men whom Moses sent "to spy out the land of Canaan" they reported that the Hittites dwelt in the mountains, from which it would appear that during the captivity of the Hebrews in Egypt they had removed into the central part of the country.[2] We hear of them again as gathering together with other tribes to fight Joshua "at the waters of Merom," where they were defeated with great slaughter.[3] It is possible that some of them escaped at that time and established themselves permanently in the valley of the Orontes, where, eventually, they formed a powerful confederation with other Canaanitish tribes.

Egyptologists learn from the monuments that the Pharaohs of several dynasties waged war upon a nation in this region supposed to be that of the Hittites. They had horses and chariots, and some of the Egyptians appear to have taken wives from among them. Ketesh, their principal city, was rendered tributary to Egypt, and it was probably situated near the present lake of Kedes. The annals of the Egyptians confirm the accounts given of the Hittites in the Bible, for in the time of Solomon we are told that all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria had horses and chariots brought forth out of Egypt; and Solomon himself had Hittite women among his many wives.[4]

Additional interest has been imparted to the subject by modern discoveries in Egypt, which imply that the Hittites had long been settled in this country and were a numerous and powerful confederation, apparently occupying the region around the head-waters of the Orontes. They are called "the Kheta" in the Egyptian inscriptions, and, probably before Abraham came to Canaan, and long before the time of Moses, there were protracted conflicts between them and the different dynasties of Egypt. M. Ebers informs us that "a stela was discovered in the wall to the south of the great hypostyle at Karnak, on which was a copy of the treaty which put an end to the war between Rameses II. and the Kheta," and he very justly adds that "this document excites our

[1] Gen xxvi. 34, 35; xxvii. 46; xxviii. 1–7.
[2] Numb. xiii. 29.
[3] Josh. ix. 1, 2; xi. 3, 5, 8.
[4] 1 Kings x. 29; xi. 1; 2 Chron. i. 17.

respect and admiration for the Asiatic nation, which must have reached a high pitch of civilization, and it raises our opinion of the high political status of both the nations who were parties to such a treaty. The Kheta king secured the alliance thus effected with the Egyptian sovereign by giving him his daughter in marriage, and this greatest of all the Pharaohs was thus enabled to enjoy the results of his successes in the field and to spend the last decades of his reign—which lasted sixty-seven years—almost without interruption in the exercise of the arts of peace."[1]

Rameses II. was proud of his own personal achievements in the wars against those Kheta. "In a furious battle near Kadesh, the capital of the Kheta, he was cut off from his army, and, by the might of his own 'right arm' he defended himself against a considerable number, forced his way through the enemy who surrounded him, and then, setting himself again at the head of his troops, he defeated the Kheta army, and forced them backwards into the river. Pentaur, the chief poet of his [Rameses II.] time, sang of this great deed of arms in an epic, which was inscribed on temple walls and in papyrus rolls—the Iliad of the Egyptians. 'I was alone, and none was with me,' is the cry that the poet puts into the mouth of the king; but Amon stood by the distressed Pharaoh and fought for him, and so the rescued king built a magnificent temple in the Necropolis as a thank-offering, and to keep his own glorious deed in remembrance. On the principal architecture of this votive building the often-repeated burden of Pentaur's epos may still be read: 'I was alone, and none was with me.' His artists have carved rich and vivid battle-scenes on the broad surfaces of the walls of the pylons, representing the fight at Kadesh, the camp of the Egyptians, the flight of the Kheta and their allies, and the king himself as of colossal stature, towering above his foes. The turmoil of the battle, the fiery onset of the horses, the heroic stature of Rameses, by whose side two lions are raging and fighting, the terror of the vanquished, and the hurry of the fugitives, are vividly depicted."[2]

The conflicts of the Egyptians with the Kheta, before and after

[1] Egypt: Descriptive, Historical, and Picturesque, vol. ii. p. 284.

[2] Egypt: Descriptive, Historical, and Picturesque, vol. ii. p. 280, 281.

the time of the Hebrew exodus, seem to throw a new light upon the condition of this country and its inhabitants. The people, at least in some parts, appear to have been more warlike and powerful than the reader of Genesis would naturally suppose.

The report of the spies, sent by Moses from the wilderness of Paran to examine the condition of the country, no longer seems to be the mere exaggeration of terrified cowards. "The people," said they, "is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven. We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we."[1] The Hittites are mentioned by the spies, and those Egyptian records supplement in many ways the Biblical narratives of the condition of this land in patriarchal times, for it is now ascertained that there was then frequent communication between Egypt and Syria. That enables us to understand how it was possible for twelve Hebrews "to spy out the land," without interruption, from the wilderness of Paran northward "unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath." As the influence of Egypt in this country must have been very great in those times, the spies probably had merely to assume the character of Egyptians to secure protection and safety; and their report seems to imply that they were not molested in their dangerous mission.

The supposed site of Ketesh is about fifteen miles north-east of this village of Hŭrmul, and a short distance south of Tell Neby Mindau, on the left bank of the Orontes. The ruins consist of heaps of rubbish, traces of foundations, hewn stones, and fragments of columns. I noticed some half-submerged vaults in one place, and at another the bases of twenty columns apparently still in their original position. The river finds its way among the ruins, and the low bridge built over it was evidently constructed out of the remains of the old city. I found the name Kedes applied only to the mill at the bridge, which is called Tâhûnet Kedes. Dr. Robinson and others who have visited that region locate Laodicea ad Libanum at Tell Neby Mindau, and it may be found that the Roman city was built upon the remains of the ancient Hittite capital.

A few miles north of the bridge the river spreads out into the shallow lake of Hums, called also the lake of Kedes, which is wholly

[1] Deut. i. 28; Numb. xiii. 31.

artificial, having been made by a dam built across the valley where it is not more than half a mile wide. The dam was built of trap rock, and the lower part was originally over thirty feet thick, narrowing towards the top, where it is now about three feet wide. The height of the dam above the bed of the river is nearly twenty feet. The facing-stone of the dam is all gone, leaving only the ancient rubble-work, which has been often broken, and subsequently roughly repaired by the natives.

Abulfeda, the celebrated Arab geographer, who was the Emîr of Hamah in the fourteenth century, relates that the building of the dam was ascribed, in his day, to Alexander the Great, and he states that there were two towers upon it At present there is only one, at the north-west extremity of the dam, called Burj Sit Belkîs. The canal that carries the water to Hums begins near the north-east corner of the lake. In former times there was another conduit at a higher level—a sure indication that the dam was originally several feet higher than it is now. Over the door of a mill below the dam is a Greek inscription, the only one that I could find.

The length of the lake is about eight miles, and the breadth four at the widest part. There is a small island, with a tell upon it, at the southern end of the lake. The tell must have been made before the lake was formed; and around it there are said to be traces of foundations and ruins of ancient buildings.

Hŭrmul, September 10th.

The fountain of the Orontes is a short hour's ride south of Hŭrmul, so we will go there first this morning. These numerous little rills which cross our path, and come tumbling and foaming down the mountain-side from the secluded ravines above us on the west, are united into rivulets in the valley, and lead away northward over the rolling country between this and Ribleh. It is mainly to the waters of those purling brooks that the extensive corn-fields around that village are indebted for their luxuriant growth.

Lieutenant Van De Velde climbed up this same road to Hŭrmul which we are now descending after his visit to "the place where the Orontes bursts forth from its copious sources." He says that, "much farther to the south [of the fountain we are about to visit], the waters of the Orontes begin to form a stream. This stream is

not derived from the main springs, but from the gradual confluence of a number of different rills into a considerable brook, which, under the name of Nahr Fîkeh, flows in a deep ravine past the chief fountain of the river. Here [above the fountain] the rocky sides of the ravine are fearfully steep; some places seem quite inaccessible. I had to follow a dangerous path, better fitted for mountain-goats than for men, in order to get to the foot of the rocks.

"On reaching the bottom you perceive, on the east side of the ravine, a hole overshadowed by thick sycamores; high brushwood seems to make it vain to attempt approaching the spot; but an eye accustomed to such jungles soon detects a winding path, and perceives also that the dark-green wild fig-trees and the festoons of vines that wind between them are the productions of a Nature to which the hand of man has remained a stranger. In this lovely spot there is a deep basin of water, which lies still and motionless, of a clear dark-blue color, and overflowing on all sides, owing to the abundant ingress of the water that rises from the subterranean springs. This seems to me to be the principal source of the river. But if one passes to the other side of the Fîkeh brook by a little bridge formed of stones and branches put together, and then cautiously ascends the cliffs, he will perceive that from under the rocks to the north of that principal source of the river the water bursts forth with great force, and this not at one point only, but at different places, all close beside each other. Boiling and foaming do the waters gush up and unite themselves with the Fîkeh stream. No wonder that hardly half a mile farther on we find the Orontes already augmented into a broad and swift-rolling stream; no wonder, too, that throughout its farther course it maintains the character of a considerable river."[1]

The fountain of Nahr Fîkeh is too far to the south-east for us to visit it, but here we are above "the copious sources of the Orontes," so graphically described by Lieutenant Van de Velde, and to descend to them we must exercise both effort and caution. The water, as you see, flows out from the very base of Lebanon in this wild and savage chasm, and forms at once a stream fifty feet wide and over three feet deep. The fountains seem to burst out

[1] Syria and Palestine, vol. ii. p. 471, 472.

from the rocks under the hill on the east side of the chasm, as if the water came from Anti-Lebanon, but the explanation is that the strata of Lebanon dip under the general plain at this end of the Bŭkâ'a, and the water is thereby carried below the surface, and is then turned back to its natural outflow, and hence it appears to come from the east instead of the west.

This Neb'a or 'Ain el 'Asy, as the natives call it, is not the most distant source of the Orontes, as we shall see during our day's ride. In the winter the fountains at Lebweh and el 'Ain contribute largely to swell the volume of the river, but at present the streams which come from them are nearly exhausted in irrigating the fields of Indian-corn, which is the chief product of this entire region, and constitutes the staff of life for most of the inhabitants.

I have followed this largest of Syrian rivers from its entrance into the Mediterranean Sea near Seleucia, at the foot of Mount Casius, to its sources in this and other chasms, and the points of special interest along its tortuous course are quite familiar to me, and the river itself I greet as an old acquaintance. It flows on to-day just as it has flowed during unknown ages in the past, and just as it did when I first stood upon this spot; and, so long as "goodly" Lebanon lifts his head to the clouds, the river Orontes will continue to pour forth its crystal waters to refresh and fertilize the plains of Northern Syria.

We will now descend along the bank for a short distance and get a view in passing of the traditional grotto of Mâr Marôn, excavated in the cliff on the opposite side of the river. It is also called Mŭghârat er Râhib, the cave of the monk.

One is taken by surprise to hear that any human being could live in such a cavern at this place, so lonely and solitary.

You need not be alarmed to hear also that the cell of the monk has since become the robber's den. I have been through it several times, and Dr. Robinson during his second tour through this country explored it carefully. He thus describes it:

"Where the stream, having turned around the high projecting point, flows eastward for a little time on the right-hand side, high up in the precipice looking north is the excavated convent now known amongst the common people as Deir Mâr Marôn. It is only

a few hundred yards distant from the great fountain, towards the north-east. The precipitous cliff is here about three hundred feet high, and the cavern is about two-thirds of the way up. The hill on the opposite side of the river is less precipitous, and rises to the height of some four hundred feet.

"The monks took advantage of a shelf of overhanging rocks, cut away more deeply underneath it, and then built up in front breastworks and outer walls, with loop-holes, thus forming a covered gallery along the face of the precipice. Behind this they then excavated rooms and cells, mainly in two stories, but also some cells in a third story. These are all small, and are now dark, dirty, and desolate. No one dwells there, though it was said that one or two monks had remained there for a time within a few years. In the autumn the cavern [is sometimes] occupied as a shelter for flocks of sheep and goats.

"The story [that the reputed founder of the Maronite sect once dwelt in that cavern] is apparently a mere legend; as is perhaps Mâr Marôn himself; there is nothing to connect [that saint] in any way with this spot or this region. The great convent said to have been founded in his honor after his decease, and called Deir Mâr Marôn, was, as some say, at Hamah; or, according to others, at Apemea, now Kŭl'at el Mudîk."[1]

We will have some difficulty in climbing up the hill without a path, and getting into the road that leads on eastward from Hŭrmul to the Kamû'a, distant about an hour from this cavern.

Having reached the bridge, we will cross over the Orontes and ascend the steep bluffs on the other side up to the level of the rolling plateau between the river and Kamû'a el Hŭrmul.

This whole region for miles around is seared and sterile, consisting mainly of low hills, covered with fragments of basaltic rock, loose and crumbling, and the scanty herbage has been entirely burnt up by the sun. There are no canals for irrigation, as the Orontes flows in its deep chasm more than a hundred feet below the surface level, and the only living thing we may see during this morning's ride is a fox, or a flock of partridges, or, perchance, a couple of fleet gazelles.

[1] Rob. Res. vol. iii. p. 539, 540.

Kamû'a el Hŭrmul looks from here like a square tower with a pointed top, and it must be visible from every direction.

We will have to leave the road and ride up to it across this rather difficult country. I saw that curious monument, standing on its elevated mound, for a day and a half before I got to it, when coming from Aleppo in 1846, and wondered all the while what it could be. Since then it has been visited by travellers, who make the detour from the regular route between Ba'albek and the Cedars.

Standing on this tell, and looking off over the plain as it expands northward towards Hamath, one feels almost assured that the narrow track of rolling country between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon connecting the plain of Cœlesyria with that of Hums is the actual "entrance of Hamath;" and that this singular monument may once have served as a land-mark upon the border of the Hebrew territory in this direction.

No one has discovered when or by whom Kamû'a el Hŭrmul was built, nor what special event it was intended to commemorate. The sculptures on its sides represent hunting scenes, and it may have been erected over the grave of some "mighty hunter" who was mortally wounded while pursuing the chase in this vicinity; but no inscriptions have been found to explain the figures or relate the circumstances, and both history and tradition are silent upon the subject. This unique and solitary monument stands, facing the four cardinal points, upon a pedestal of basalt about five feet high, and is reached from either side by a flight of three steps. It is built of limestone, and consists of three stories: the first has square pilasters at the four angles, supporting a plain cornice; the second is a little smaller, and has two pilasters on each side and one at each angle; the third story rises from a receding base above the cornice, and is a perfect pyramid in shape. At the base the monument is thirty feet square, and the first story is about twenty-five feet high; the next is nearly twenty, and the pyramid, surmounting the whole, about fifteen, so that the entire structure from the base to the summit must be more than sixty-five feet high.

The common limestone of the neighborhood was used in the construction of this extraordinary monument; the stones are about two feet thick, and well squared, but they were laid up without

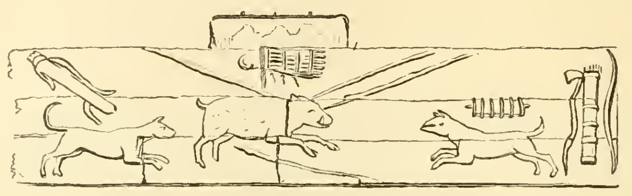
cement or mortar, and, consequently, it has not been able to withstand the destructive power of the earthquake. It is cracked in several places, and the south-west corner has fallen, carrying with it a portion of the pyramid. We are thus enabled to see that the interior was built up solid, though of smaller stone.



KAMÛ'A EL HŬRMUL—MONUMENT COMMEMORATIVE OF THE CHASE.

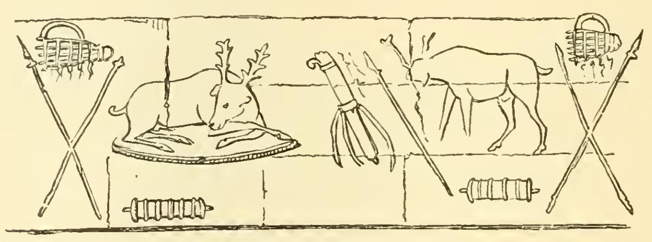
But the distinctive and peculiar features of Kamû'a el Hŭrmul are those hunting scenes so boldly and graphically delineated in relief upon its sides. The sculptures of animals and implements of the chase on that broad surface of smoothly-cut stones, near the top of the first story, are almost of natural size.

Those on the east side are the most distinct; they represent dogs attacking a wild-boar from before and behind. Spears are



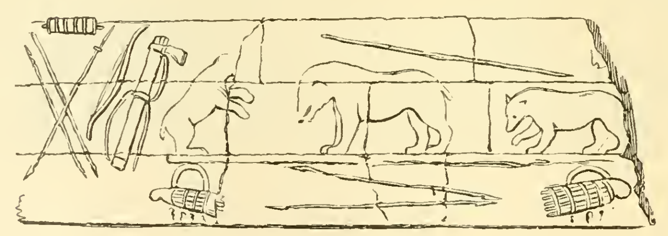
Figures on the east side.

hurled, of which three stick in his side, and there are bows, quivers, a coil of rope, perhaps, and other hunting implements. On the north side there are two stags—one standing, the other lying down;



Figures on the north side.

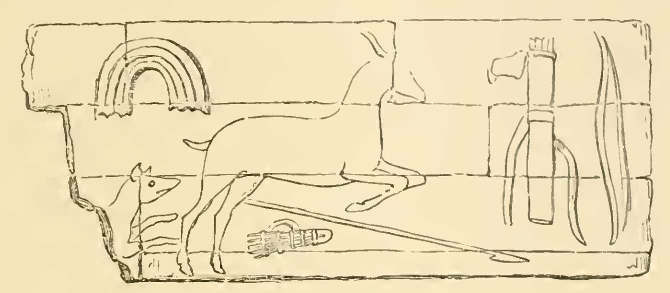
and there are spears crossed, quivers, and two coils of rope. In the middle of the west side is a large animal, probably a bear, with two cubs—one standing up in front, the other following behind. There



Figures on the west side.

are also spears crossed, a coil of rope, bows, quivers, and spears, apparently hurled. So much of the south side has fallen away that the animals represented there are somewhat indistinct, but a dog

appears to be seizing an animal from behind, probably a stag or a gazelle. The body of the dog and a part of the head of the stag are gone, but bows, quivers, a spear hurled, and other implements of the chase are plainly visible.



Figures on the south side.

Few sites suggest scenes of such varied interest in the history of this country. Kamû'a el Hŭrmul stands on this dreary and desolate hill, high above the surrounding region, and in the narrowest part of this rolling plateau. Below it, on the north, flows the classic Orontes diagonally across the plain, past the Biblical Riblah and the supposed site of Ketesh, and through the lake of Kedes, and thence by Hums and Hamah and Apamea to Antioch and the sea at the foot of Mount Casius. Eastward the plain rolls back to the horizon and onwards to the Euphrates; and westward the towering heights of Lebanon shut out "the great sea," and the plain of Cœlesyria stretches away southward far as the eye can follow to where the snow-capped range of Hermon is faintly outlined against the pale blue sky. Mighty armies—Assyrian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, Jewish, Greek, Roman, Christian, and Saracen—have marched past during the long ages of human history, but now that nameless monument is deserted in this solitude, and left to tell its story to the stars. Bears and boars, gazelles and jackals may still roam around it, but men and armies will rarely, if ever, come within sight of its sculptured walls.

Instead of descending again into the valley of the Orontes we will make our way through the open, roadless country—a rocky and desert plain—to the fountain near Lebweh, about three hours' ride to the south. We shall, ere long, reach a broad canal which

conveys the water of that fountain northwards to Kâ'a, a distance of about fifteen miles, to irrigate the extensive corn-fields which lie too high to be flooded by canals from the Orontes itself. For several miles above the fountain of el 'Asy, near Mŭghârat er Râhib, the bed of that river is more than fifty feet below the surrounding country, and the rocky banks on either side are nearly perpendicular, so that one has no suspicion of their existence until he finds himself suddenly standing on the brink of the chasm.

This must be the canal you mentioned, and there is water enough in it and to spare for irrigating purposes.

And yet so utterly sterile is the soil in this vicinity that nothing grows along the course of the canal itself.

That village on our left is called Râs Ba'albek. It is distant three hours and a half, to the north-east, from Lebweh, and the intervening country is hilly and broken, descending rapidly to the south-west. Part of the present village lies in ruins, but there are indications that it was formerly a Christian town of some importance. A fine fountain bursts out in the village, and contributes largely to the productiveness of the gardens and fruit orchards and to the fertility of the plain below er Râs and to the west of it.

There are in and about the place the ruins of ancient buildings, the remains of an aqueduct, and the foundations of two churches, which were solidly built of large beveled stones, and must have been of considerable size. A short distance east of the village there is a dilapidated convent, facing the deep gorge between the lower ridges of Anti-Lebanon. Its only occupant is a monk from 'Abeih, with whom I am well acquainted. His pastoral charge consists of a flock of goats, over which he watches with zealous care, as Râs Ba'albek is a notorious place for sudden raids by prowling Arabs from the eastern desert.

Dr. Robinson identifies er Râs with the ancient Conna, between Emesa, Hums, and Heliopolis, Ba'albek, and the seat of a bishop in the province of Phenicia in Lebanon. As there is very little resemblance in the names, he asks, "Is perhaps the present name er Râs merely a translation of the Greek [words], the head?"[1] The answer to which may possibly be found in the correctness of a simi-

[1] Rob. Res. vol. iii. note 5, pp. 536, 537.

lar identification of another Beit er Râs, south-east of Gadara, "in Decapolis," with the Roman city of Capitolias.

From the top of that hill ahead of us we will bid farewell to Kamû'a el Hŭrmul and the lake of Hums, and then descend into the deep chasm of Wady Fîkeh. The village of Fîkeh is not visible from here. It is in the bottom of the gorge, and considerably higher up the stream. The valley, though narrow and precipitous, is well cultivated; but in winter the water of this little brook is, of course, not needed for irrigation, and it is then allowed to descend westward and join the river that comes down from Wady Lebweh. This winding road up the chasm, on the south side of Wady Fîkeh, is much steeper than the one by which we descended into the valley, and we still have a ride of about an hour along a comparatively level road before reaching the fountain at Lebweh.

That small village on the left, up amongst the foot-hills of Anti-Lebanon, is called el 'Ain, the fountain. It is abundantly supplied with water from three small fountains, and surrounded by verdure and vineyards. If it was not so far south it might be identified with the Ain mentioned in Numbers in connection with Riblah, on the east border of the Promised Land.[1] The reference there is probably to the fountain of the Orontes near Mŭghârat er Rahîb. There are some rock tombs west of el 'Ain, but no ancient remains of importance, in the village. This stream that comes down from el 'Ain is sufficiently powerful to drive some flour-mills below the village.

On one occasion I rode for several hours southwards through the corn-fields in this vicinity, in order to find the water-shed between the Bŭkâ'a and the valley of the Orontes, and, just before sunset, I noticed that the water from the irrigating canals began to run towards the south instead of the north. There, of course, was the water-shed of that region, and it was nearly due west of the fountain of Lebweh, to which we are now going. The corn-fields ran out into a rolling wilderness of barren hills; the sun went down, and a dense fog enveloped us in almost total darkness. I had with me only one native, and, after wandering about in hopeless bewilderment until nearly eleven o'clock at night, we were

[1] Numb. xxxiv. 11.

rejoiced to hear the barking of dogs, and soon found ourselves in the midst of an encampment of Bedawîn Arabs.

We had no little difficulty in establishing peaceable relations with the fierce shepherd dogs, and on arriving at the tent of the sheikh we found only his wife and daughter in it, he himself having been summoned to Ba'albek by the Pasha. The sheikh's wife, however, was quite equal to the occasion. She rekindled the expiring fire, roasted and made some hot coffee for us, and gave us bread, and brought leben "in a lordly dish" for our supper.

That modern Jael was of an inquiring turn of mind, and, as she had never before entertained a European guest, she had many curious questions to ask. Finally she retired to another part of the tent, leaving us to doze by the fire until daylight. She then ordered one of the Arabs in the camp to guide us to the regular road along the Bŭkâ'a, and we pursued our way until noon before overtaking our servants and the baggage. They also had got lost in the fog, and, finding a spring of water, encamped near it, greatly perplexed and anxious about us, for they knew that we had no provisions, and no beds nor any bedding.

I suppose we need only to follow the canal, along which we have been riding, to reach the fountain at Lebweh?

Nor is it far off. I begin to see the ruins of the village, which lie a short distance to the north-west of it, on a low tell nearly surrounded by the streams from the fountain. I have, generally, found this village almost deserted, as it is now, but sometimes it is inhabited by the peasants who cultivate the corn-fields which spread out into the plain below. Lebweh occupies an old site, and it is believed to correspond to the Lybo of the ancient Itinerarium Antonini, a place on the road between Emesa and Heliopolis. On the north side of the tell are the foundations of an old structure, probably those of a temple, and the rest of the mound is covered with heaps of rubbish, with here and there a piece of a broken column or the fragments of a capital. Arabian writers mention Lebweh as a fortified place; and here it is said that, in the twelfth century, a company of two hundred Saracen horsemen fell in with a troop of Frank cavalry, put them to flight, and killed their leader, a chief of the Knights Hospitalers.

The quantity of water at this fountain of Lebweh, one of the most distant sources of the Orontes in this direction, is very great. It issues from a mass of pebbles and gravel, at the base of a ledge of limestone rock, in four large streams and many smaller ones, and is used to irrigate the fields both to the south and west; but the greater part of the water is taken northwards by that canal close to which we have been riding for so long to-day. The rest of the water flows off towards the north-west, in a deep and narrow channel, along the eastern side of Lebanon, and through a rocky and barren region. The stream from Neb'a Lebweh is joined by that coming down Wady Fîkeh, and the two, under the name of Nahr el 'Asy, unite with the water of the great fountain near Mŭghârat er Râhib and form the river Orontes.

There is nothing here to detain us but the grateful sight of this verdure, spreading all around like an oasis in the desert, so we will continue our ride to Ba'albek, which is five hours and a half distant. Some travellers on the regular road from Ba'albek to the Cedars spend the night at Lake Yemmûneh; others, however, prefer to camp at 'Ainâta, a village to the north-east of the lake.

I thought there was no large lake on Lebanon.

A number of small streams rise along the western side of the lake from the very roots of Lebanon, and, uniting around the base of an ancient temple, form a considerable river, which crosses the plain eastwards for nearly a mile, when it disappears in a sink-hole under the surface of the lake or pool. When the supply from that river is greater than the capacity of the sink-hole, the water spreads out far and wide into the lake, which is increased or decreased in size according to the volume of water and the season of the year. That disappearance of the water is one of the most remarkable phenomena of the kind in this country; and the question is, where does it reappear? The natives think that Birket el Yemmûneh is the source of Nahr Ibrahîm, which, as you will remember, issues from the cave of Adonis at 'Afka, below the Natural Bridge, and on the other side of Lebanon. The more probable theory is that it forms part of the fountain of the Orontes near Mŭghârat er Râhib.

During the heavy rains of winter Birket el Yemmûneh actually deserves the name of a lake, for then the narrow plain south of it,



BIRKET EL YEMMÛNEH—LAKE ON LEBANON.

which stretches along the eastern base of the lofty range of Lebanon, is flooded for a considerable distance. Even in summer there is a sheet of water more than a mile in length; but the lake is greatly reduced in the autumn, as the principal fountain near the temple almost entirely dries up at that season.

The ruins of the temple are near the base of the mountain, which sweeps upwards to the clouds in one magnificent rise of more than three thousand feet. It stands on a low rocky platform, facing the main fountain, and the water that flows out around it is of the softest and coldest in the land. The platform was two hundred and sixty feet long by two hundred feet wide, and the temple is about

fifty-six feet long by thirty-six feet wide. Some of the stones are very large, but the edifice appears to have been destitute of architectural ornamentation. In winter the numerous springs which surround the site transform it into a low island, and then the ruined temple presents a very striking appearance.

We have had in view for some time the ruins of Ba'albek, dominating the glorious plain of the Bŭka'a, which stretches away off to the south-west far as the eye can follow.

It looks like some formidable castle of mediæval times, but I am surprised that there are no villages in sight upon the plain.

The land, however, is highly cultivated, but, as in the case of other plains in this country, the peasants have their homes on the neighboring hill-sides. In the central parts there is no water. The heat in summer is oppressive, and the climate unhealthy. On the hills the air is cooler and pure, and there are all the fountains.

Instead of going direct to Ba'albek we will turn to the right and visit a curious monument which stands alone in the open plain of the Bŭkâ'a, and apparently had no connection with any other structure ancient or modern.

The only living objects near it this evening are those noisy hawks, who greet us with shrill screams of alarm as they hover about their nest in the crevices at the top of the column. It is much weather-worn, and looks as though the first shock of an earthquake would bring it to the ground.

And yet it was exactly in its present condition forty-five years ago, when I first saw it; and, having survived so many of those destructive phenomena in the long ages of the past, no one can predict the time of its final overthrow.

For what purpose do you suppose it was erected?

Like the lone monument of Kamû'a el Hŭrmul, this 'Amûd Yâ'ât, or el Maghzel, the spindle, as it is called, may have had some reference to boundaries; but more probably it was raised in commemoration of some important victory, or special event now unknown. The column, standing upon a pedestal six and a half feet high, is of the Corinthian order, and is reached by five steps. The shaft is composed of fifteen blocks, five feet in diameter and three feet thick, but the capital is weather-worn and disintegrated.

and the inscription on the north side is so defaced as to be entirely illegible. Including the base and capital, this singular monument must have been more than fifty-five feet high, and it may have had a statue on the top of it.

We are now on the regular road from the Cedars to Ba'albek. Wearied with this long day's ride, we will not stop at Nahleh to examine the foundations of a ruined temple, resembling those we saw on Hermon, nor visit the rock-cut tombs east of that village. An easy ride of an hour and a half will bring us, in the cool twilight, to our tents, pitched in the court of the great Temple of the Sun, from where we can gaze at our leisure upon the ruins of Ba'albek, those marvels of architecture in this or in any other land.

IX.

BA'ALBEK TO DAMASCUS.

Ba'albek and el Bŭkâ'a.—Approach to Ba'albek from the Cedars, and from Zahleh.—Personal Experience.—The Cardinal Points.—Position of Ba'albek.—The Ancient City.—The Old Wall.—Doric Column.—Remains of the Old Town.—Statues.—The Modern Town.—The Acropolis.—Artificial Platform of the Great Temple.—Stairway Leading to the Platform.—The Portico.—Latin Inscription.—Antoninus Pius and Julia Domna.—Massive Square Towers.—Large Stones.—Vaults.—Main Entrance.—The Hexagonal Court.—The Triple Gate.—The Great Court.—Niches, Recesses, and Chambers.—The Eastern, Northern, and Western Sides of the Court.—Raised Platform.—The Temple of the Sun.—The Peristyle.—The Six Columns.—The Walls of the Temple Platform.—Cyclopean Stones and Walls.—Trilithon.—The Three Great Stones.—Seven Stones in the West Wall.—Nine Stones Parallel to the North Wall.—Vaults and Galleries under the Platform.—Temple of Jupiter.—The Pantheon at Athens.—Platform of the Temple.—The Portico.—The Peristyle.—The Vestibule.—The Portal.—Mr. David Roberts.—The Hanging Keystone.—The Assyrian Eagle.—Stairway to the Top of the Temple.—The Nave of the Temple.—Fluted Columns and Sculptured Niches.—The Sanctum.—Sacrificial Procession.—Vaulted Chambers.—Moslem Iconoclasts.—Nine Columns on the North Side of the Peristyle.—Entablature and Roof of the Peristyle.—Lieutenant Conder.—Three Columns on the West Side of the Temple.—The Leaning Column on the South Wall of the Temple.—Four Standing Columns.—Fluted Columns of the Portico.—Saracenic Tower.—The Octagonal Temple.—Columns, Niches, and Festoons.—Ionic and Corinthian Columns around the Interior Walls.—A Christian Church.—Râs el 'Ain.—Cœlesyria.—El Bŭkâ'a.—The Orontes and the Leontes.—El Berdûny and Nahr 'Anjar.—The Grave of Noah and the Tomb of Seth.—Toi and David.—The Hittites and the Egyptians.—The History of Ba'albek.—Baal-gad.—The Plain of Aven.—Heliopolis.—Julia, Augusta Felix.—The Emperor Trajan.—John of Antioch.—Antoninus Pius and Septimus Severus.—Julia Domna and Heliogabalus.—Venus Worshipped at Ba'albek.—The Emperor Constantine.—Muhammedan Vandalism.—Kŭl'at Ba'albek.—The Quarries.—The Great Stone in the Quarry.—Kubbet Dûris.—The Road to Damascus.—Emîrs of Beit Harfûsh.—Bereitân.—Khuraibeh.—A Donkey Fallen under its Load.—The Humane Laws of Moses.—Nahr Yahfûfeh.—A Roman Bridge.—Sŭrghâya.—Volcanic Plain.—The Water-shed.—'Ain Hawâr.—Ez Zebedâny.—The Plain, the Gardens, and the Vineyards.—The Source of the Barada.—The

Lofty Range of Anti-Lebanon.—Blûdân.—Wild and Romantic Scenery in Sûk Wady Barada.—The Pass.—The Bridge.—Ancient Roadway Cut in the Rock.—Latin Inscriptions.—"Abila of Lysanias."—Rock-hewn Aqueduct and Rock-cut Tombs.—Ancient Quarries.—The Tomb of Abel.—Ruins of a Small Temple.—Plain and Village of Sûk Wady Barada.—A Devout Hermit.—Gibbon.—Kefr el 'Awamîd.—Ancient Temple.—Ride along the Canal.—A Succession of Surprises.—'Ain el Fîjeh.—The most Copious Source of the Barada.—Massive Remains of Platforms and Temples.—Fever and Ague.—'Ain el Khudra.—Grand Scenery and Execrable Road.—Tunnel through the Cliff.—Zenobia and Palmyra.—Bessîma.—Es Sahra.—French Carriage-road.—Dummar.—Kubbet en Nŭsr.—First and Finest View of Damascus.—Description of the Scene by Lieutenant Van de Velde and Mr. Addison.—The Barada Described by Dean Stanley.—The Canals and Streams from the Barada.—The Main Stream.—The Paradise of the Prophet.—The Mountains and the Plain.—Hermon.—Nahr el A'waj, the Pharpar.—Jebel Kasyûn.—Adam and Abraham.—Cain and Abel.—Es Salahîyeh.—Broad Paved Road.—The Tent and the Hotel.

September 11th.

I HAVE devoted the early hours of the morning to these celebrated ruins, and have examined them again and again, and always with a feeling of ever increasing admiration and astonishment.

The disappointment experienced by some visitors on first approaching Ba'albek is partly owing to the vast proportions of the surrounding region. The valley of Cœlesyria, now called el Bŭkâ'a, extends to a great distance northward and southward, and is shut in by the long and lofty range of Lebanon on the north-west, and that of Anti-Lebanon on the south-east. During the many hours of approach along its undulating surface towards Ba'albek the eye grows familiar with such magnitudes as the extreme length of the plain, the great height of the mountains, and the profound depths of the valleys, and in comparison with them any structure of man's designing, no matter how imposing, is as nothing.

Coming to Ba'albek from the Cedars, the distant view of these ruined temples is not very impressive, and to approach them from Zahleh is still more disappointing, as I experienced on my first visit in 1835. Hour after hour we rode along over the plain in weary monotony. Several times I spurred my horse to a gallop, expecting to reach those columns in a few minutes, but had to draw rein again and breathe my jaded steed, that had not a particle of my enthusiasm. When, at last, the hoofs of our horses clattered upon the pavement at the entrance I exclaimed, almost in disgust, to my

companion, "Is this Ba'albek?" "It is," was his reply; "and now prepare yourself for hours, if not days, of exploration and wonder; you will need all that time, and, having done that once, you will do it again whenever you have an opportunity."

Dismounting, I came to a prostrate column, and was surprised to find that, on tip-toe, and with my arm outstretched, I could not measure its diameter. I climbed up between two of those six standing columns, and felt dwarfed to utter insignificance beside them; and I looked up to the entablature with awe, and wondered how high it could be. A fallen fragment lay close by, and I jumped down to measure it, and to my astonishment found that it was more than fourteen feet thick! Such columns and such fragments lay all around, in bewildering confusion; but by degrees I learned to comprehend the grand design of the whole, and from the platform in the middle of the great court I tried to reconstruct, in imagination, their magnificent sanctuaries.

I cannot feel at home in any place until the points of the compass are correctly understood. Here the east persistently seems to be north, and the west south. Let us, therefore, commence our survey of these celebrated ruins at Ba'albek by settling the actual position of the four cardinal points.

That can easily be accomplished if you will bear in mind that on a low ridge or spur of the sloping tract which extends westward from Anti-Lebanon into the Bŭkâ'a, and upon an artificial platform, raised from thirty to fifty feet above the immediate environs, these ruined temples stand, facing the rising sun. They are surrounded by mulberry-gardens and groves of walnut and poplar trees, through which small streams from Râs el 'Ain find their way to the plain below. This particular site was selected, I suppose, because it was the first beyond the fountain which extended farther west than the city, so that the temples would stand out alone and conspicuous, and command an unobstructed view over the Bŭkâ'a to the north and south—of Lebanon across the plain westward, and Anti-Lebanon eastward. The ground rises gently to the south-east, affording an admirable position for the town, whose Syrian name, Ba'albek, was translated by the Greeks into Heliopolis, the City of the Sun.

The old city was irregular in form, and was surrounded by a

wall, which can be traced along almost its entire circuit of nearly two miles. The existing fragments of the wall reveal the fact that it was not the most ancient, since it was constructed out of older material; and the part still standing, on the south-west, with its battlements and square towers, though both are badly cracked and broken, has quite a modern appearance. When I first visited Ba'al-bek I saw the fragments of a Doric column, which stood on the hill-side, in the angle formed by the wall, and over a cave in which are several sarcophagi. The height of that column, from the bottom of the base to the top of the capital, was about forty feet. A hole appears to have been made in the capital to correspond to a groove in the side of the shaft, but for what special purpose it is now impossible to determine. Built into the wall in that south-western part of the city are fragments of ornamented friezes and cornices. Some of the sculptured stones are upside down, and others have portions of Greek inscriptions upon them.

The remains of the old town are of no special importance. They consist of detached masses of building-stone, fragments of columns, friezes, and cornices, plain and ornate, thrown together in heaps or scattered here and there in hopeless confusion. Statues and other antiquities have been dug up from the ruins, and some stones were found with Greek inscriptions upon them. Careful excavations would probably reveal more of the same kind. The modern town lies to the east of the temples, and is built among the ruins, and out of the old material, of the ancient town. It occupies but a small portion of the original site, and consists of about two hundred and fifty houses, most of which are inhabited by Greek Catholics, and the rest by Moslems and Metâwileh.

The modern traveller, however, does not linger amongst the remains of the old city, nor loiter about the narrow streets and crooked lanes of the present town. The main attractions of Ba'al-bek are the wonderful ruins of these temples, which surpass even those of Greece and Rome in the vastness and boldness of their design, their symmetrical proportions, and the delicate execution of their elaborate decorations. It has been well said of them that "these temples have been the wonder of past centuries, and they will continue to be the wonder of future generations." Let us now

BA'ALBEK AND LEBANON



proceed, in imagination, to the Acropolis, in the north-western part of the city, where the temples stood, and which constituted its defence in that quarter for centuries after their destruction.

The Acropolis extended westward from the town, rising gradually in that direction, and the artificial platform occupied by the great temple was irregular in form and nearly one thousand feet in length from east to west, and four hundred and fifty feet wide from north to south. A broad flight of steps, probably one hundred and fifty feet in length and fifty feet wide, led up from the city to the portico at the eastern end. The steps are now all gone.' The floor of the portico was elevated about twenty feet above the ground. The portico was one hundred and eighty feet long from north to south, thirty-seven feet wide, and probably over forty feet high. It had twelve columns in front, four feet in diameter, and with an interval of ten feet between them.

Standing on that elevated platform, supporting a portico one hundred and eighty feet in length, those columns, with their Corinthian capitals and ornamented entablature, must have presented a magnificent appearance. Only the bases of the columns remain, upon two of which are Latin inscriptions to the effect that Antoninus Pius and Julia Domna, grateful for their safety, caused the capitals of the columns to be covered with gold. Flanking the portico on the north-east and south-east are square towers, with rooms in them. Those towers would attract attention anywhere, for they were constructed of very large stones — one of them is twenty-five feet long—and the spacious room in each is more than thirty-five feet square, and ornamented with pilasters, niches, and cornices. Steps led down from the rooms into vaults beneath the platform. The upper parts of the towers have been fortified with battlements and pierced with loopholes by the Saracens.

The wall at the back of the portico is nineteen feet thick, and most of the stones of which it was constructed are of cyclopean size, some measuring from ten to twenty feet in length. That massive wall is also ornamented with pilasters, niches, and cornices, and through it was the main entrance leading into the hexagonal court beyond; but the interior of the portico is now filled with heaps of ruins and great masses of fallen walls, and the gateway is

almost entirely blocked up. The gate consisted of three portals, the central and largest of which was twenty-three feet wide, and the smaller ones, on each side of it, were ten feet in width.

The side entrance on the left is the only one now open—a low passage roofed over with very large stones.

Entering the hexagonal court, it is found to be two hundred feet in length from east to west, and two hundred and fifty feet wide from angle to

PLAN OF THE COURTS AND TEMPLES AT BA'ALBEK.

angle. On all sides—east, north, and south, except the west—it had rectangular recesses, with four columns in front of each; and at the angles there were irregularly shaped rooms of different sizes. The eastern recess was the vestibule before the entrance from the portico, and directly opposite to it, on the western side of the hexagonal court, was the triple gate leading to the great court in front of the Temple of the Sun. The central portal of that gateway was fifty feet wide, and the side portals were each ten feet in width, and the ornamentation upon them all was extremely rich and elaborate. Only one of those portals remains—that on the right.

The great court is a quadrangle four hundred and forty feet long and three hundred and seventy feet wide. On all sides except the western this great court had niches, rectangular, square, and circular recesses or chambers, differing in size, and having two or more columns in front of each. The recesses are separated from each other by square pilasters with Corinthian capitals, and between them are two rows of niches: the lower is shell-shaped, or scolloped, the upper is plain, with a projecting cornice or pediment; and that design, of niches between square pilasters, has been generally followed along the walls of the recesses themselves. Above the niches ran an uninterrupted entablature, with a frieze composed of garlands of fruit and flowers, and all the recesses are supposed to have once been covered over. All of them are now in ruins, and there is not a column left standing. As the recesses on the three sides correspond in every respect with each other, a description of those on the right of the small portal, along the east side of the court, and the ones along the north side of it, will give an adequate idea of them all, and of the general appearance of the great court itself.

Proceeding northward, therefore, there is, next to the triple gate, on the right, a large niche eighteen feet in width, which was probably intended for a colossal statue; then a rectangular recess about twenty-five feet deep and forty-five feet in length, with four columns two and a half feet in diameter in front, of Syenite granite from Egypt. Next to that there is a room thirty feet in length, with a door in front instead of columns, and a side door communicating with a chamber, about twenty feet square, in the north-east corner of the wall of the great court.

Turning west and proceeding along the north wall of the court, there is a room similar to that on the east of the square chamber in the corner, with which it also communicates by a door. The square chamber is thus rendered inaccessible except from these side rooms. Next to that room is a rectangular recess, with four columns in front, then a semicircular one nearly thirty feet long, with two columns in front; and next to it, occupying the middle of the



SHELL-SHAPED AND RECTANGULAR NICHES AND SEMICIRCULAR RECESS AROUND THE GREAT COURT.

wall on this side, is a rectangular recess over sixty feet in length, with six columns in front. Then follow, in the same order as before, a semicircular recess with two columns in front, a rectangular one with four columns, and a room with a door next to the corner. Adjoining this is a shell-shaped niche; but there were no recesses or columns along the west side of the court between it and the peristyle of the temple, a distance of about one hundred feet.

In the middle of this western part of the court, and fronting the temple, are the remains of a raised quadrangular platform, upon which, it is said, there were two rows of pedestals, three in a row, probably intended for statues. We have now, in imagination, before us—standing upon a stylobate three hundred feet long and two hundred and forty feet wide, and considerably higher than the great court which we have just traversed—the Temple of Baal, or of the Sun. Broad steps led up to it, and it was surrounded by a peristyle two hundred and ninety feet in length by one hundred and sixty feet in breadth, consisting of fifty-four columns seven and a half feet thick, sixty-two feet high, and supporting an entablature the top of which must have been eighty feet above the ground, and one hundred and thirty feet above the level of the plain.

All that remains of that magnificent peristyle are six columns, with their entablature, standing among the most wonderful masses of ruins that man has ever seen, and the like of which he will never behold. The base of each column consisted of a single block of limestone, the shaft of three unequal in length, the capital of one, and the entablature, reaching from column to column—a distance of about fifteen feet—was also composed of but a single block, nearly square. The sections of the shafts were fastened together by round or square iron cramps, and the distance between the columns was eight feet. The style of architecture is Corinthian; the capitals of the columns are richly sculptured, and the entablature is profusely ornamented with fretted mouldings, garlands, and busts, designed with great taste, and carefully executed. From the splendid effect produced by the six columns now standing the magnificence of the entire peristyle can be imagined, and some idea formed of the grand appearance of the temple itself. Not a trace remains of its walls, however, and the probabilities are that it was never built, and that "the peristyle alone served the purpose of a vast hypæthral temple" under a clear sky, and dedicated to the Lord of Light at Ba'albek, "the city of the sun."[1]

If those columns, whose shafts lie in great fragments all around, ever enclosed a temple, it must have been of the usual quadrangular form, and it stood facing the east on this elevated platform high

[1] Rob. Res., vol. iii. p. 512.



THE SIX COLUMNS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE PERISTYLE.

above the plain. Only the north wall that sustained the line of columns on that side is exposed to view. It consists of thirty-nine courses of large bevelled stones, each course being nearly four feet high, and of about the same thickness. The eastern wall adjoins the western side of the great quadrangular court in front of the

peristyle. The southern wall is almost entirely buried up with rubbish and ruins, and the western wall is partly broken down, affording a view through the gap of the mulberry-gardens below and the plain beyond. The walls upon which the columns were erected were of the same height, but whether the platform enclosed by them was built up solid, or whether the temple stood on massive vaults, can only be determined by careful excavation.



THE THREE GREAT STONES IN THE WEST WALL.

But neither the courts, nor this platform, nor these columns, nor yet the temple itself constituted the greatest of Ba'albek's architectural marvels. Those were the cyclopean stones and walls which surrounded the Acropolis itself, and they still confound even the imagination of the beholder. To see them we must descend from this platform, near the north-western corner, to the gardens at its base, on the outside of these walls. Those "external substructions," as they are called, were nearly thirty feet distant from the walls sustaining the columns, and on the north side the intervening space appears never to have been filled in. The most imposing of

them are the celebrated "three stones" in the western wall, that gave the name of Trilithon to the temple in ancient times.

There they are; look at them!—the most enormous stones that man ever quarried out of the solid rock or built into the walls of any edifice. They are twenty feet above the ground, and rest upon seven stones each one of which is almost thirty feet long and thirteen feet high, and those are laid on others much smaller—a curious fact, but not uncommon in the construction of ancient massive substructions. The great marvel is, how they were placed on the top of those other stones, which are themselves of a wonderful size even in Ba'albek. The largest of the three stones is sixty-four feet in length, the second sixty-three feet eight inches, and the third sixty-three feet, and together they are one hundred and ninety feet eight inches long, thirteen feet in height, and about the same in thickness. They contain more than thirty-two thousand cubic feet, and must weigh nearly one thousand tons each—the greatest masses of stone ever handled by man. They were cut and polished with such exactness and care that when brought together the blade of a penknife could not have been inserted between them, and even now at first sight they seem to be one prodigious stone in the wall, nearly two hundred feet long.

Passing around this north-west angle of the platform, and proceeding along the north side, we come to nine large stones corresponding to the seven in the west wall upon which "the three stones" are placed. These stones are also cyclopean in size and appearance, measuring about thirty-one feet in length, thirteen feet in height, and ten feet in breadth, and they were laid here just as they came from the quarry. They stand in line, parallel to the north wall of the platform, and distant from it about twenty feet—the most ancient, the roughest, and most picturesque objects in all Ba'albek. It may have been the intention to place the great stone still remaining in the quarry upon this wall, and thus to complete the line of substructions to the north-west corner; but that entire work seems to have been abandoned, the most ancient platform was evidently left unfinished, and the temple which was to have been erected upon it may never have been begun.

The platform upon which the courts and peristyle of the Temple

of the Sun stood, and which is now covered with ruins, is sustained by vaulted galleries, crossing each other at right angles. Those vaults were constructed of very large stones, and the foundations are of the same age as the external substructions, but the arches are Roman, and, from the inscriptions upon the walls and keystones, it appears that they were used for stables and warehouses by the Roman soldiers. We will now return to the top of that platform by the same way that we came down here, and, passing by the six columns, visit the lesser temple, which stood a few rods to the south-east of them.

It is probable that the Temple of the Sun was consecrated to all the gods of Heliopolis, and that this temple was dedicated by the Romans to Jupiter. It is small when compared with the great temple near it, but it is actually the largest, most perfect, and most magnificent temple in Syria, and is only surpassed, in the beauty of its architecture, though not in size, by the Pantheon, at Athens. The platform upon which it stands is considerably lower than that of the great temple, and probably there was no connection between them. There were no courts in front of the temple, but a flight of thirty steps led up to the portico from the east. The steps were still in existence in 1688, but they have been destroyed since then, and their place is now occupied by a Turkish fort. The temple, including the colonnades, was about two hundred and twenty-five feet long, and one hundred and twenty feet wide, and it was surrounded by forty-two columns, fifteen on each side, eight at the end, and the same number in front, counting the corner columns twice. An interior row of six fluted columns formed the portico, and the vestibule was included between the projecting walls of the cella. Similar columns stood one on each side of the portal.

Nothing now remains of the portico but a few fragments of shafts and bases of columns, and its place is partially occupied by the wall of the modern Turkish fort. Crossing the vestibule, which was sixty feet wide and twenty-five feet deep, we come to the portal of the temple, forty-two feet high and twenty-one feet wide; but nearly half of it is concealed by ruins and rubbish. Just as "the three stones" exceed all others in size, and "the six columns" surpass in grandeur anything still standing amidst the ruins

of the great temple, so this portal excels all else in the profusion and variety of its ornamentation, and the admirable skill with which those intricate designs have been executed.

The sides or door-posts of this magnificent entrance are huge pilasters, in three courses, and the top, or architrave, is composed of three great blocks, elegantly sculptured on three sides. Around the door, on the outside, is a belt of rich ornamentation, in receding panels, of leaves, flowers, and fruits, vines and grapes intertwined, and most delicately carved in relief. Above this the architrave is elaborately adorned with vines and grapes, figures and animals, and the frieze and cornice are finished with rich mouldings, acanthus-leaves, corbels, and scrolls. In the words of Mr. David Roberts, the well-known Scotch artist, "this is perhaps the most elaborate work as well as the most exquisite in its detail of anything of its kind in the world. The pencil can convey but a faint idea of its beauty. One scroll alone of acanthus-leaves, with groups of children and panthers intertwined, might form a work of itself. Even independent of the beauty of the sculpture, and its excellent preservation, we are lost in wonder at the size of the stones, and at the nature of the machinery by which such masses were raised and placed in position."[1]

But Time has dealt ruthlessly with this noble structure. In 1751 it was still perfect; but the earthquake of 1759, besides overthrowing three columns of the peristyle of the great temple, and nine in that of this temple, cracked and broke these massive monoliths, or door-posts, and so rudely shook that lofty architrave that the ponderous key-stone slipped from its central position and sank down about three feet. There it remained suspended in the middle, between those great blocks of the lintel on either side, for more than a hundred years, threatening the astonished beholder with instant annihilation if it suddenly dropped down upon him. This key-stone is nearly eleven feet high, twelve feet thick, and six feet broad, and will weigh about sixty tons. Quite recently, through the laudable efforts of Mr. Burton, the English consul at Damascus, it has been propped up by a square pier built of ordinary masonry. But the celebrated eagle sculptured upon it has

[1] Roberts's Holy Land.

TEMPLE OF JUPITER





PORTAL AND KEY-STONE OF THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER.

thus been completely concealed from view. That eagle was represented with a tuft or crest of feathers, and with outstretched wings, holding in its claws a staff or caduceus, and in its beak twisted garlands, the long strings of which extend on either side, and are held up by flying genii. The crest is supposed to be emblematic of the sun, the god to whom the eagles and the temples were consecrated. Similar eagles have been found upon the ruins of some of the most ancient temples in this country, as at Rŭkhleh, and especially the

one on the portal of the Temple of the Sun at Palmyra. They are all supposed to be of Assyrian origin.

Winding stairways within the jambs of this portal lead up to the top of the temple. The entrance to one of them is built up, but we can get through the low opening near the base of this one, on the right, and ascend to the top of the wall, from where we will obtain a good view of this assemblage of ancient architectural marvels and of the plain and the surrounding mountains.



INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER.

Descending into the interior of the temple, we see that it had no windows, and probably it was only partially roofed. The nave measures about ninety feet in length by seventy-four feet in width. On the sides up to the sanctum it had eight fluted half columns, with Corinthian capitals, and having two niches between them, one above the other. The lower niches were arched and elaborately sculptured; the upper had highly ornamented triangular pediments,

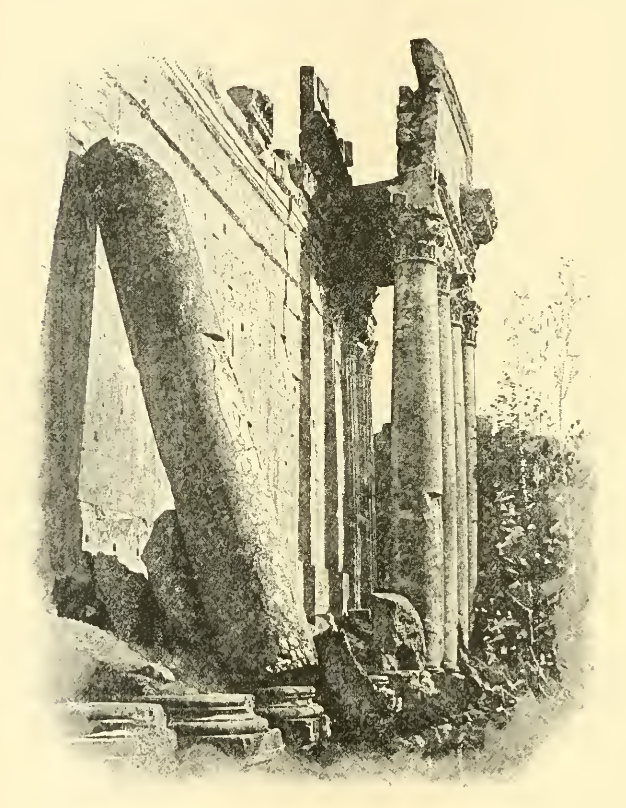
supported by slender columns, and they appear to have had central pedestals for statues. The semi-columns in the corners on either side of the portal were double, and the sanctum at the west end had square pilasters on the sides, with Corinthian capitals.

The sanctum, or place of the altar, extended quite across the cella, and was about thirty feet broad. It was elevated nearly six feet above the floor of the nave, and several steps led up to it. On each side of the steps are great slabs, with groups of figures carved in relief upon them, representing a sacrificial procession, and doors lead down to vaulted chambers beneath the sanctum. These groups are much defaced, probably by the fury of Christian or Moslem iconoclasts, or by both. They have been but recently excavated, and if not again covered up the figures will ere long be entirely destroyed. The nave or cella of this temple is buried many feet deep with great masses of sculptured friezes, fragments of columns, capitals, and heaps of rubbish ; but it ought not to be uncovered until there is a government in this country that can and will protect from ruthless vandalism the exquisite remains of ancient art which such excavations would surely bring to light. Leaving the interior of this temple of Jupiter, let us now walk around the peristyle on the outside of it.

Here on the north side there are nine columns still remaining. They stand nearly nine feet apart, and there is about the same distance between them and the temple wall. The diameter of the columns is over five feet ; the base is three and a half feet high ; the shaft, composed of three stones, is forty-eight and a half feet in height, and the capital is six feet high, making the total height of each column about fifty-eight feet. The entablature resting upon these columns is about ten feet high, and has a double frieze, richly ornamented. It is connected with the wall of the temple by great slabs of stone, slightly concave, which form the roof of the peristyle. They are divided into panels of various shapes—hexagons, rhomboids, and triangles, containing busts in high relief of gods and probably emperors, but most of them have been purposely defaced. The mouldings, scroll-work, tracery, and foliage, filling up the intervening spaces, are all exquisitely sculptured, and when perfect this ceiling of the entire colonnade must have pre-

sented a beautiful appearance. Lieutenant Conder, of the Palestine Exploration Fund, supposes, from actual calculation, that these columns supporting that entablature and the roofing were subjected to "a crushing weight on each pillar of one hundred and five and a half tons, or four tons to the square foot."

Of the eight columns on this western side three remain standing, with their entablature connecting them together; the fragments of four are still in position, and one has been entirely overthrown. Passing round to the south side, the bases only of four columns are left in situ. One column has fallen against the temple, but so firmly was it held with iron cramps that the first and second section of the shaft remain fastened together and lean unbroken upon the wall of the cella, apparently a solid column thirty-seven feet high, and fifteen feet in circumference, and there it has been for more than a hundred years. Farther on are four standing columns supporting a connecting entablature and roofing; and, on turning the south-east corner, we see behind the first two a couple of the fluted columns which extended along the eastern side and formed the portico in front of the temple. Upon the top of those



THE LEANING COLUMN ON SOUTH WALL OF THE TEMPLE.

four columns, at the south-east angle of the temple, and at a height of nearly fifty feet from the ground, the Saracens built that square tower which is now in ruins. Its superincumbent weight and precarious condition seriously threaten the stability of the supporting columns and of that part of the temple itself.

Having now examined the ruins of these marvellous temples, with all their platforms, courts, porticos, gates, columns, thick walls, and great stones in the substructions, we will leave the Acropolis and pass through the fields and along the village lane to visit the small circular or octagonal temple. It stands a short distance to the south-east of the temple of Jupiter, surrounded by high garden walls, and almost concealed by mulberry-trees and tall silver-leafed poplars.



RUINS OF THE PORTICO OF THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER.

In order to get a good view of its beautiful proportions we will have to climb over this garden wall on the west side of the road. It is evidently of the same age and style of architecture as the great temples, but is not supposed to have had any connection with either of them.

This templet was semicircular in form, about forty feet in diameter, and was approached by a broad flight of steps. It is sur-

rounded by a peristyle of six Corinthian columns, whose architraves and entablatures are also semicircular, projecting outward from the temple walls to the columns, a distance of about nine feet, and it is that feature which gives to the temple its octagonal appearance. Similar columns stand close to the entrance, one on each side, and the door-posts consist of large monoliths. The entire structure seems to have been covered with a domed roof. The entablature is elaborately ornamented, and along the walls of the temple, between Corinthian pilasters, are shell-shaped niches with round architraves, supported by small square pillars. Above the niches hang festoons of foliage and flowers, with bosses over them and figures at each end, and "wherever a bust or a statue could be introduced it has been placed there."

The exterior of this temple is the most attractive; within it is encumbered with ruins and rubbish. Around the interior walls there are two tiers of small columns, one above the other. The lower tier is Ionic, supporting a plain cornice, and the upper is Corinthian, with triangular projecting pediments. Two hundred years ago this little temple was used as a church by the Greek Christians, but now its condition is very precarious, and the slightest shock of an earthquake will prostrate this elegant gem into a shapeless mass of unsightly rubbish.

A walk of nearly twenty minutes along the green banks of this little stream will bring us to Râs el 'Ain, or the fountain-head, as it is now called. Heliopolis must have depended upon that copious fountain for its supply of water, and there is evidence in many parts of the temples that they were also abundantly provided for from the same source. This purling stream rises about a mile to the south-east of the temples and near the head of its own little valley, between the hills at the base of Anti-Lebanon. Left to itself its natural course would be southward along the plain until it joined the Lîtâny, and Râs el 'Ain is now regarded as the fountain-head of that river, yet not a drop of its waters reach the Lîtâny except in winter. So full and strong is this stream, however, that even in summer, after supplying the modern town, driving the mills and watering the gardens, it is only exhausted in irrigating the corn-fields which extend for some distance into the plain.

Here is the fountain, and, as you perceive, it boils up from the ground in several places, and is enclosed by a low semicircular wall, forming at once a pretty little pond overflowing with clear,



THE OCTAGONAL TEMPLE.

cold water. The trees, the greensward, and the murmuring streams make this a delightful place of resort for the natives, and Râs el 'Ain is famed for the salubrity of its air as well as its refreshing fountains. Those ruins close by are the remains of two mosks, built, according to the inscriptions, about six hundred years ago by the Muhammedan rulers of Ba'albek, Melek ed Dhâhir and his son, Melek el As'ad.

September 11th. Evening.

The view from the top of the hill above Râs el 'Ain of the ruins of Ba'albek, the mountains of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, and the Bŭkâ'a between them, was magnificent. We could see far down that beautiful plain, and it seemed to fall away westward and southward with a very manifest descent. I would like to explore it, for it is associated in my mind with Cœlesyria of historic celebrity.

According to the early classic geographers, Cœlesyria included

only this long, broad valley or plain which separates the parallel ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, and which is mentioned in the Old Testament in connection with Baal-gad as "the valley of Lebanon."[1] Dr. Robinson supposes that Amos alludes to it when he speaks of the "plain of Aven."[2] The name Cœlesyria does not occur in the Bible, but was given to it by the Greeks, after the time of Alexander the Great, and it exactly describes this remarkable valley or "hollow" between the two mountain ranges of Syria. Its modern Arabic name, el Bŭkâ'a, the cleft, is equally significant, and it is frequently spoken of as Sahl el Bŭkâ'a, the plain of the cleft. It extends from Kamû'a el Hŭrmul, on the north, opposite the highest peaks of Lebanon, to Jubb Jenîn, under Hermon, on the south, a distance of about seventy miles, having an average width of from seven to nine miles. The highest part of the Bŭkâ'a is in the neighborhood of these temples, which are nearly four thousand feet above the sea; but west of Lebweh the plain descends gradually northward and southward until near Hŭrmul, and below Jubb Jenîn it is not much more than two thousand feet above sea-level.

The Orontes, called el 'Asy, the rebellious, because its course is northwards, contrary to that of the other rivers in Syria, drains the northern part of the Bŭkâ'a. The central and southern portions are comparatively level, and their fertility and beauty are entirely due to the abundance of water. The Lîtâny, the ancient Leontes, one of the longest and largest rivers of Syria, rises near Ba'albek, and is joined, as it flows southward through the plain, by many tributaries. Amongst them is el Berdûny, which descends from snow-capped Lebanon, above Zahleh, and the large stream from Nahr 'Anjar, that flows out from the very roots of Anti-Lebanon near the site of ancient Chalcis. Perennial streams descend from the mountains on either side, and copious fountains rise in the plain itself in such positions that the water can be conducted to all parts of its surface. Looking down upon the Bŭkâ'a from any one of the hundred stand-points on Lebanon and Hermon, the beholder is charmed with the checkered and endlessly-varied expanse of blending wheat-fields, green or golden, recently-ploughed land, black or reddish-brown, and broad belts of dun-colored fallow ground,

[1] Josh. xi. 17; xii. 7. [2] Amos, i. 5; Rob. Res., vol. iii. p. 519, 520.

reaching to the foot-hills, and losing themselves amongst the vineyards that cling to the mountain-sides.

The Bŭkâ'a has a legendary history of its own, attested by curious monuments. At Kerak Nûh the grave of Noah is shown, and on the opposite side of the plain is the tomb of the prophet Seth, while the ruins of these temples at Ba'albek have astonished the world for many centuries. The massive foundations surrounding them, and upon which they were built, must have been placed here at a time too remote for even tradition to reach; and long before "Toi, king of Hamath," sent presents to David, the Hittites of that region were sufficiently powerful to contend with the Pharaohs of Egypt for supremacy in this valley of Cœlesyria.[1]

Has Ba'albek no Biblical history?

We read that, after his victory at "the waters of Merom," "Joshua took all that land, from mount Halak even unto Baal-gad in the valley [or bŭkâ'a] of Lebanon under Mount Hermon;" and, again, that when "Joshua was old there remained much land to be possessed," amongst which was "all Lebanon towards the sunrising, from Baal-gad under Mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath."[2] Baal-gad, in the Bŭkâ'a—for the Hebrew and Arabic words are identical—must then have been a noted place on the northern border of the Promised Land, and was evidently consecrated to the worship of Baal from remote antiquity. These notices of Baal-gad in the Bible agree very well with the location of Ba'albek. It is "in the valley of Lebanon under Hermon," and midway between that mountain and "the entrance into Hamath." The gigantic proportions of the oldest remains now seen at Ba'albek carry back to remote antiquity the existence of this site, and it may have been one of the holy places of the Canaanites or Phœnicians in the time of Joshua. If the "plain of Aven," mentioned by Amos, was the plain of On or Heliopolis, and identical with this plain of Ba'albek, then, nearly seven hundred years after Joshua, Ba'albek was celebrated for the worship of the sun, introduced into it from Egypt. That is all its Biblical history; but it is still uncertain whether this ancient and remarkable site is anywhere referred to in the Bible.

[1] 2 Sam. viii. 9-11.

[2] Josh. xi. 17; xii. 7; xiii. 1, 5.

As Heliopolis, Ba'albek is mentioned by several writers during the first centuries of the Christian era; but the principal notices of it are derived from the coins of the second and third centuries, which represent it as a Roman colony, styled Julia Augusta Felix. The coins of Septimus Severus show two temples, one a larger and another a smaller, and a coin of Valerian has two temples upon it. The oracle at Ba'albek, or Heliopolis, was consulted by the Emperor Trajan, in the second century, before he undertook his second expedition against the Parthians; but the earliest authentic record of these temples is found in the writings of John of Antioch, surnamed Malala, about the seventh century. He mentions that "Ælius Antoninus Pius erected at Heliopolis, in Phœnicia of Lebanon, a great temple to Jupiter, one of the wonders of the world."

It is possible that the original design here at Ba'albek was to construct a platform surrounded by cyclopean stones, and to erect upon it an altar consecrated to the worship of Baal. That design appears never to have been fully accomplished, and the Phœnicians probably adapted this site for one of their temples. The Greeks and the Romans, in their turn, may have adopted both the site and the ruins of the Phœnician temple for their own purposes; and Antoninus Pius perhaps began to build his temple out of the remains of one more ancient, and it was probably finished by Septimus Severus fifty years later. That may have been the smaller temple, and it was probably consecrated to Jupiter; the great temple of Baal or the sun was apparently never finished. Julia Domna, mentioned in the votive inscriptions, was the wife of the Emperor Severus and the daughter of the priest of the sun at Emesa, Hums.[1] Her relative, Heliogabalus, also a priest of the sun, assumed that title when he was proclaimed emperor in Emesa, and afterwards built a temple dedicated to the Syrian god on the Palatine Hill, at Rome. It is not improbable that both of these temples were built by the munificence of the Roman emperors during the early centuries of the Christian era, and that here are the ruins of their greatest architectural achievements.

Venus was also worshipped at Ba'albek, under the name of Hedone, pleasure, and the beautiful octagonal temple in the fields

[1] See page 321.

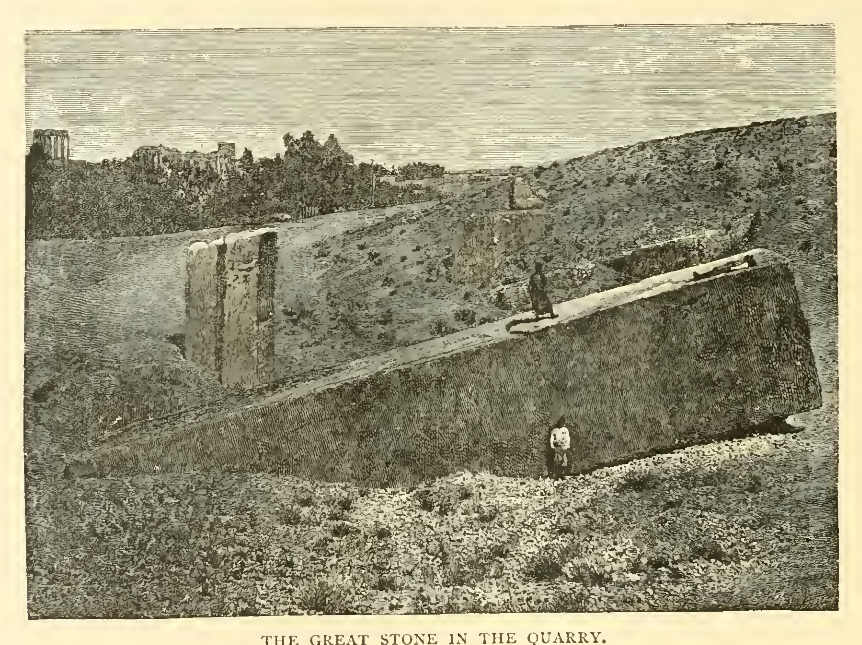
may have been dedicated to that voluptuous goddess. But the worship of heathen deities and the celebration of their rites and ceremonies was suppressed by the Emperor Constantine. He built a large basilica here, whose ruins are probably those still seen in the middle of the great court in front of the temple of Baal. During the last thirteen centuries the Muhammedans—fanatical haters of all temples, idols, and even innocent statues—have done what they could to deface and destroy the architectural and artistic beauties of Ba'albek, and they have recorded their zeal and success in pompous inscriptions; none of them, however, of much historic value. By those vandals the entire platform, vaults, temples, and all, were converted into a strong fortress, still known amongst the natives as Kŭl'at Ba'albek—the castle of Ba'albek. Deluded victims of Baal's abominations have been here; and to these temples came the worshippers of Jupiter and the votaries of Venus; and here Christian martyrs have been put to death by heathen idolaters and zealous followers of the false prophet. The Canaanite and the Hebrew, the Assyrian and Egyptian, the Greek and the Roman, Saracen and Christian, Tartar and Turk—all have been here; and for centuries to come travellers from every nation will visit these ruins with wonder and admiration.

September 12th.

We will pass by the great stone in the quarry, this morning, as it is on our way to Damascus, and from the top of the hill above it you will get the best general view of Ba'albek and its ruined temples. The quarries are less than a mile distant, to the south of the town, and are an interesting study to the architect and the antiquary. They show the great thickness of the rock formation, which enabled the builders of the temple to cut out immense blocks and large stones of any desired length and breadth. Such formations are rare in this region, and that may have led to the selection of the site of the temples at Ba'albek.

These ancient quarries extend along the base of the mountain towards the south-west for a considerable distance, and some of them appear to have been wrought to a great depth. Stones for the modern buildings in the town are now quarried from a place farther south, where the rock is white, soft, and easily wrought.

Now you can see how those enormous stones in "the substructions" of the great temple were quarried. A space of about six inches was cut into the solid rock around and below them, and when thus detached they were conveyed rough-hewn to the places they were to occupy in those cyclopean walls. This great stone was not entirely separated from the rock beneath, but for what reason the work of cutting it away was suspended we shall probably never know. It is larger in every respect than either of the



THE GREAT STONE IN THE QUARRY.

three others in the west wall, and the intention was, perhaps, to place it upon the row of nine large stones in front of the north wall of the temple platform. From here it looks as if a man could reach the top of it, but ride up to it and you will be astonished to find that even on horseback, with a cane in your hand, you cannot measure its height. It is nearly seventy feet long, fourteen feet wide, and fourteen feet high; contains about thirteen thousand five hundred cubic feet, and would probably weigh fifteen hundred tons! How those enormous masses of stone, in such great blocks, were transported and placed in position on the wall, twenty feet

above the ground, is another of the unexplained wonders connected with the famous ruins at Ba'albek.

Near that village of Dûris, on the road to Zahleh, and about half an hour from Ba'albek, is a rude Moslem sanctuary, probably once the tomb of some great saint or sinner. It is octagonal in shape, and was constructed of fragments of pillars and square stones taken from the temples at Ba'albek. One of the granite pillars is upside down; and an old sarcophagus, set up on end, served as a prayer niche. It is called Kubbet Dûris, and is of no special interest, except that the eight pillars of which it is made are of Syenite granite from Egypt.



KUBBET DÛRIS.

The road to Damascus turns to the left here, and ascends diagonally the declivities of the eastern mountains, which are rough and rocky, and frequently intersected by ravines, which drain the waters of this part of Anti-Lebanon into the Bŭkâ'a. A path leads southwards to Neby Shît, a large Mutawâly village, where there is a conspicuous wely, the reputed tomb of the prophet Seth; and on the opposite side of the Bŭkâ'a, at Kerak Nûh, is the tomb of the patriarch Noah, both of which we have already noticed. Those villages are near the border, between the district of el Bŭkâ'a and that of Ba'albek.

The feudal lords of Beit Harfûsh, a family of Metâwileh Emîrs, governed this district, from Zahleh northward, including Ba'albek, the surrounding mountains, and the adjacent plain. They were a turbulent set, occupying these rugged mountains of Anti-Lebanon, and almost as independent as the Emîrs of Lebanon. Between them there was eternal enmity, and many a bloody battle. The

Emîrs of Beit Harfûsh were always in a state of chronic rebellion against the Turkish government, and they kept this district of Ba'albek in constant turmoil by their tyrannical abuses and daring robberies. A few years ago the government made a clean sweep of the entire family, and those of the Emîrs not killed were banished to distant parts of the empire. Though severe, the treatment was needed, and the beneficial effect upon the country is seen and felt even by the wayfarer and the stranger. We ourselves can now pitch our unprotected camp where it suits our purpose, without fear of disturbance or danger of robbery.

Our road over the low foot-hills of Anti-Lebanon since leaving the quarries has been singularly devoid of interest.

From 'Ain el Bârideh, with its small fountain, to Bereitân, it runs parallel with the Bŭkâ'a, and would have been exceedingly monotonous were it not for the fine views it affords in many places of the beautiful plain and the grand range of Lebanon west of it. At Bereitân there are many rock-cut tombs, some of which have Greek inscriptions upon them; and though the village is prettily situated between white hills on the eastern edge of the Bŭkâ'a, it probably has neither a Biblical nor historical interest attaching to it. The road now begins to ascend the mountain, and in about one hour and a half it will lead us to Khuraibeh.

The village is a most unsightly cluster of dilapidated hovels, and its name is an appropriate one, since it means a ruin; otherwise it has little to distinguish it from many similar places on these mountains, except a wide, deep well which supplies the inhabitants with water, there being no fountain in this place.

After passing through Khuraibeh our ride has been along the dreary slope of this mountain, and in many places it is very narrow, and even dangerous.

A misstep would roll horse and rider down the mountain-side for several hundred feet into the valley below. Our course is eastwards, and in a little over an hour we will reach the top of this gradual ascent, and then descend steeply to the bridge over Nahr Yahfûfeh by a zigzag path, paved here and there with limestone bowlders, lying at all angles of inclination, and worn smooth by constant travel and hopeless neglect.

Thus far, however, we have not had any accident—not even the usual falling of a mule under the load or the tumbling off of the cook with the provisions for our lunch.

Yet this very path, so rocky and slippery, has just furnished us with a commentary on one of those humane precepts which distinguish the Mosaic laws. See those men ahead of us lifting a poor donkey that has fallen under its load. Moses says, "If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him."[1] Now the people lifting the donkey are bitter enemies—Maronites and Druses—quite recently engaged in a bloody civil war, and ready to begin again on the very first opportunity, and yet they help to lift the ass that is lying under his burden as though they were the best friends in the world. We have in this simple incident the identical occasion for the precept, and its most literal fulfilment. Nor is that all. It is fair to infer, from the peculiar specification made by Moses, that the people in his day were divided into inimical parties and clans, just as they now are in these mountains. Moses would not have mentioned the ass of an enemy if enemies were not so common that the case specified was likely to occur.

So, also, we may conclude, I suppose, that the donkeys were half-starved, and then overloaded by their cruel masters.

Such are now the conditions in which those poor slaves of all work ordinarily fall under their burdens, and then, as now, it required the united strength of at least two persons lifting, one on either side, to enable the ass to rise out of his painful and often dangerous predicament. The plan is to lift the beast to its feet without taking off the load, which is a tedious business. And we may also infer that the roads were then as rough and slippery as this which has upset that unfortunate donkey.

All those deductions I believe to be very near the truth. Manners and customs, men and things, roads and loads are apparently very much what they were three thousand years ago.

We are now on the road to Damascus that passes up from the Bŭkâ'a along this pretty little valley with running water in it, the first we have come to since leaving Ba'albek. The stream is here

[1] Ex. xxiii. 5.

called Nahr Yahfûfeh, and it descends through this wild and winding gorge, with rugged precipices on either side, to the Bŭkâ'a, and thence across the plain to join the Lîtâny. It is here spanned by a low stone bridge, evidently ancient, and probably Roman — a relic of the old road between Ba'albek and Damascus, traces of which are still visible in several places. Turning southward, we will ascend this fertile valley, through fields of Indian-corn, and along the eastern bank of this purling brook which is half concealed by thickets of wild roses and overshadowed by willows and poplars, with here and there a grove of walnut-trees. In half an hour we will come to the fine fountain of Sŭrghâya, below that village.

Sŭrghâya is surrounded by fields of corn, vegetable gardens, and fruit orchards, while the banks of the sparkling stream below it are lined with walnut-trees and groves of silver poplars; but the inhabitants are rude and fanatical Moslems. I once spent a night there, encamped below the village, near a grove of poplar-trees; and the next morning we were greatly annoyed by some of the people, who tried to extort a heavy fine from our muleteers for alleged injury done to a few trees by their mules.

This plain, through which we have been riding south of Sŭrghâya, appears to be of volcanic origin.

There can be no doubt about that. It is, in fact, an elevated plateau, nearly level, over a mile in width, and extending for more than three miles between two parallel ranges of mountains. Its surface is covered with lava bowlders and stones, and is but partially cultivated, having some vineyards, wheat-fields, and gardens. It is the water-shed between the east and the west, and that is the most interesting feature about it. All the waters and streams that descend from the southern part of this little plain fall into the Barada, and, passing Damascus, are lost in the marshes of the lakes on the borders of the eastern desert, while all from the northern part run down to the plain of Cœlesyria and join the Lîtâny, and thus enter the Mediterranean near Tyre.

We have already passed the water-shed, about four thousand feet above the level of the sea, and our road follows the course of this stream from 'Ain Hawâr, that hamlet on the left. It is a winter tributary of the Barada, the far-famed "river of Damascus;" but

in summer its waters are exhausted by the town of Zebedâny and its gardens. The distance between Ba'albek and Zebedâny is about seven hours, and the road we have travelled over to-day is the shortest, though not the most interesting one. In another hour we will reach our tents, pitched near that flourishing town.

September 13th.

This beautiful expanse of green meadows, gardens, and trees is an exceedingly refreshing sight, and the murmur of running water and the songs of many birds is delightful to the ear.

The position of Zebedâny, in the midst of its gardens, here at the northern end of this plain, which stretches away southward for more than seven miles, is exceedingly picturesque. The plain is well cultivated and abundantly irrigated. It was once, probably, the bed of a natural lake more than three thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea, and on its sloping sides are terraced vineyards, and some of the gardens are surrounded, like those at Damascus, by impenetrable hedges, and abound in fruit-trees of all kinds. The grapes, apples, and apricots of Zebedâny are celebrated throughout the country, and the markets of Beirût and other towns are supplied from these gardens.

The streams of several copious fountains enter this verdant plain from the hills around the northern end, and by them most of the gardens and fields in the central parts are well watered, while those along the east side are irrigated by abundant streamlets that descend from the lofty mountain-range of Blûdân. The river Barada rises in a small, oblong lake or pond among the low hills on the west side of the plain, about four miles south of Zebedâny, from whence it meanders, as we shall see, along the western and southern borders of the plain, but contributes little or nothing to its fertility. The lake is marshy, and covered with reeds and bushes, but it is nowhere very deep, and the amount of water issuing from that source of the upper Barada is not half as large as that from the great fountain at 'Ain el Fijeh.

It is about nine hours to Damascus by the route we propose to follow, and it is quite time we were in the saddle. Instead of passing down the middle of the plain we will ride around to the east

side of it, and through the luxuriant gardens of Zebedâny which extend for some distance southward.

We are already amongst the numerous streamlets that come tumbling down the declivities of these mountains which rise so abruptly on the left to a great height.

They form part of the loftiest range of Anti-Lebanon; those on the western side of the plain are nearly six thousand feet above the sea, but these are higher still. The town of Zebedâny has an elevation of nearly three thousand six hundred feet, and Blûdân, on the mountain above it, to the east, is a thousand feet higher, while the lofty peak of Anti-Lebanon, behind that village, rises to a height of more than seven thousand five hundred feet above the level of the Mediterranean.

Blûdân is best known as the village where the British Consul of Damascus, the Irish and American missionaries, and a few merchants of that city spend the summer. It is beautifully situated on the mountain-side, facing the west, and surrounded by vineyards and gardens of fruit-trees, vegetables, and flowers. It is abundantly supplied with running streams and purling brooks, and, from its great elevation, commands a magnificent view of the plain beneath and the mountains beyond as far southward as Mount Hermon.

Having passed away from the borders of those fruitful gardens of Zebedâny, which have the neatest and best kept hedges in Syria, not excepting those of Damascus, we will now turn westward across the plain to the Barada, and follow the left bank of that river to where it descends, through the eastern mountains, into the deep and narrow chasm of Sûk Wady Barada.

The river here appears to be deep, and its course swift and noiseless, as it goes on its winding way through the fields and meadows of this ever narrowing plain.

Farther on, near the ruins of an ancient bridge, it falls over a ledge of rocks in a series of beautiful cascades; and thence onwards to the pass west of the village of Sûk Wady Barada it is a tumultuous and roaring torrent. There we may rest awhile in the wild and romantic gorge and admire the grand and magnificent scenery almost unequalled even in this country.

These cliffs are in some places quite perpendicular, especially





FALLS OF THE BARADA—THE RIVER ABANA.

on the southern side of the gorge, and the mountains towering above them on our right are at least a thousand feet high.

In the narrowest part of this chasm is the famous pass of Sûk Wady Barada, where the lofty and perpendicular cliffs are not much more than one hundred and fifty feet apart. And here, just at the outgo of the river, between the high and rocky walls of the pass, the Barada is spanned by a modern bridge of a single arch.

On the northern or left bank of the river, and about one hundred feet above the bridge, is an ancient road, cut along the face of the cliff and through the solid rock for a distance of over six hundred feet. In some places the rock was cut down nearly fifteen feet, and the roadway hewn out to a width of over twelve feet. The road terminates abruptly at the north-east end in a precipice, and if it was carried any farther it must have been over a viaduct or upon an embankment. Two Latin inscriptions on the rock above the road, and near its eastern terminus, ascribe the work to the emperors Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Verus, about the middle of the second century.

The most interesting portions of those inscriptions apparently reveal the fact that the expense of constructing the road and cutting through the rock was borne by the inhabitants of Abilene. The mention of that place, in this vicinity, is regarded as confirming the identification of Abilene with the city of Abila, and both with the tetrarchate of Abilene governed by Lysanias when John began to preach the baptism of repentance in the wilderness of Judea.[1] This identification is now generally accepted, and the ancient remains near the village of Sûk Wady Barada are supposed to mark the site of the "Abila of Lysanias."

I notice several rock-cut tombs above the Roman roadway, in the cliffs on the north-western side of the river bank.

I have climbed to an ancient aqueduct, below the road, and then up to the tombs. The aqueduct appears to have been constructed about the same time as the road. It is also hewn out of the rock in some places, and tunnelled through in others. The tombs are of the ordinary kind, of which we have seen so many in this country—square chambers with loculi for sarcophagi on the sides and in the floors. The tombs are without inscriptions, and the sepulchres empty. Some of them appear to have had stone doors, which may, probably, still be found in the débris below the tombs. On the top of the mountain above those rock-cut tombs are extensive ancient quarries.

High up on the southern cliff, nearly opposite the village of Sûk Wady Barada, and surrounded by venerable oak-trees, is Wely Neby Habîl, the reputed tomb of Abel, where, it is said, he was buried by Cain his brother. Like the traditionary tomb of Noah and that of the prophet Seth, the tomb of Abel is a place of Muhammedan pilgrimage. It is part of the foundations of an old wall, about thirty feet long, and can be traced much farther than the domed structure that rises above it. It is quite possible that Neby Habîl may have derived the name from Abila, that of the ancient city whose site is supposed to have been near this pass of Sûk Wady Barada. South of the tomb are the prostrate ruins of a small temple, about fifty feet in length and thirty feet wide.

We have been resting here nearly an hour admiring this wild

[1] Luke iii. 1–3.

and impressive scenery. Let us cross the bridge and proceed on our way towards 'Ain el Fijeh. You will observe that the lofty cliffs of the defile soon separate below the bridge, mainly by the receding of those on the left, thereby affording space for the little plain and the village of Sûk Wady Barada. The river winds through the plain; and amongst the trees, which thickly cover the entire surface, are seen many fragments of the houses of ancient Abila; but there are no remains of any temple, public edifice, or even large building. The road beyond the bridge passes, for some distance, below the overhanging cliff on the right bank of the river, but soon the mountain falls back and the declivities become less precipitous, and open out towards the south-east so as to allow an easy ascent out of the valley for the regular road to Damascus.

The situation of this village, in the bend of the river, surrounded by trees, gardens, and vineyards, is quite picturesque, and the scenery around it is wild and imposing.

This romantic spot, shut out from the rest of the world by these lofty mountains and perpendicular cliffs, was the chosen retreat of a devout hermit, whose cell was visited by many pilgrims during the fair that was annually held in this vicinity, and from which this village derived its name of es Sûk, the fair. And here was enacted one of those diabolical scenes of surprisal, massacre, and plunder for which the Moslems have always been pre-eminently celebrated. Gibbon has given an exceedingly graphic account of that catastrophe, and of the slaughter of the pilgrims and merchants gathered here, and he closes the description in his usual vein of ridicule and sarcasm. "The holy robbers," he says, "returned in triumph to Damascus. The hermit, after a short and angry controversy with Caled, declined the crown of martyrdom, and was left alive in the solitary scene of blood and devastation."[1]

On that high hill above the road is Kefr el 'Awamîd, the village of the columns, so called from the prostrate columns of an ancient temple which once stood upon the brow of the hill. The portico of the temple faced the Barada, and must have commanded a good view of the river and the valley below. We shall not turn aside to visit it, nor shall we follow the course of the river, which here flows

[1] Dec. and Fall of the Rom. Emp., chap. li.

southwards for a short distance to the right side of the valley, but, fording the stream below the mills on the opposite bank, we will continue our ride nearly due east, along this canal that irrigates the luxuriant gardens below us. The road—a mere path—follows the sinuosities of the canal, having the verdant expanse of gardens and vineyards on our right, and the white limestone cliffs of the mountain towering a thousand feet high on the left. Passing this way on a dark night, our animals were at times unable to keep to the path, and repeatedly stumbled into the canal, to the great disgust of the muleteers and our annoyance.

There is no danger of that kind to-day, for we have already followed the canal for half an hour, and I am quite delighted with the luxuriance of the vegetation and the grandeur of the mountains and cliffs on either side of the valley.

As there is nothing of special interest in any of the villages along this route, we will pass on for half an hour and stop to lunch at 'Ain el Fîjeh, the most famous fountain in all this region.

Your assurance, this morning, that our ride to-day would present a succession of surprises has been fully confirmed.

The charm of them all is due entirely to the Barada. That river, flowing through the verdant plain of Zebedâny, rushing down the defile of Sûk Wady Barada, and meandering along the valley towards 'Ain el Fîjeh, gives to this Damascus road its ever-changing character and remarkable contrasts. Without the river the plain would become a dreary desert, the defile a desolate pass, the valley the dry bed of a torrent, and these high mountains and picturesque villages would be bleak and unattractive.

Here at 'Ain el Fîjeh one is at a loss which most to admire—the great quantity of water that bursts from beneath this ruined platform, cold and beautifully clear, or the rushing, roaring cataract, foaming and tumbling over the rocks as it plunges down its narrow channel; or the thick forest of tall trees, willows and walnuts, sycamores, plane and poplars, that overshadow the banks, or the magnificent cliffs that rise a thousand feet or more and shut in this happy vale on every side. Each in turn delight the eye of the beholder and captivate the imagination.

'Ain el Fîjeh, though not the most distant, is by far the most

copious source of the Barada. Arab geographers, however, regarded it as the fountain-head of the river of Damascus. That is hardly correct, for the upper Barada drains the entire mountains and valleys of this part of Anti-Lebanon for more than twenty miles, and during the rainy season it is a formidable river, altogether independent of its auxiliary from 'Ain el Fijeh. This fountain bursts out from a cavern under the mountain that has two openings, one of which is partly arched over, and in winter the volume of water is twice the size of that in the upper Barada.



THE BARADA AND THE FÎJEH—THE MEETING OF THE WATERS.

Escaping from the cavern, it rushes down over and amongst the rocks, and through a perfect forest of walnut, poplar, and other trees, with the impetuosity of a roaring torrent, and then expands into a broad stream, clear as crystal. A hundred paces farther on it joins the Barada, and the two streams run side by side for some distance, until the limpid waters of 'Ain el Fîjeh are finally merged into the turbid stream of the Barada.

Above the cavern is an ancient platform, built of large and massive stones, and upon it are the remains of a small temple, about thirty feet square; but it now has neither portico nor columns. Below the platform, and to the right of the cavern, there appears to have been another temple constructed over a heavy vault, through which the stream from the fountain may have been conducted. The side-walls or piers supporting the vault are nearly forty feet long and six feet thick. The rear wall rested against the bank, and was about thirty feet long and four feet thick. It had an opening as if to receive the water from the fountain, and there is a similar opening towards the front, apparently for the stream to flow out. These ancient structures were perhaps dedicated to the god of fountains and streams and overshadowing groves.

More than half of our day's ride still remains to be accomplished, and it is time for us to proceed on our way.

I should like to spend days here instead of hours.

No doubt; and yet, like the first Paradise, this one has its serpent. Fever and ague lurk about it and infest its groves. Owing to the superabundance of water, and the dense foliage and the rank vegetation, 'Ain el Fîjeh is decidedly unhealthy in summer and autumn. I have been struck, while passing up the valley in October, with the sallow countenances of the natives. It is then not safe to sleep a single night at that glorious fountain.

A canal runs along from the fountain to irrigate the fields below us; are we to follow it, as we did the one from Sûk Wady Barada?

The road descends through the river gorge, and in half an hour it will bring us to the beautiful little meadow of Bessîma.

This small fountain of pure water, surrounded by greensward, rises close to the river and runs directly into it.

It is called 'Ain el Khudra, the fountain of verdure, and from here on the valley narrows, and the precipitous sides of the chasm leave hardly room for the road.

The scenery in this gorge is magnificent and truly sublime, but the road is execrable and dangerous, especially where it winds round the face of the cliff which overhangs the river.

Below this, and beyond the village of Bessîma, the gorge, whose general direction has been eastward, makes an abrupt turn south-

wards, and becomes so narrow that there is not space enough for even a foot-path along its precipitous sides. A tunnel has been excavated there through the cliff on the left bank of the river. I have attempted to penetrate the palpable darkness at its mouth, but without a light it is impossible to venture very far into that unique tunnel. It varies in height and width, and has occasional openings in the roof. The tradition among the natives is that the tunnel was made by Zenobia to convey the water of 'Ain el Fîjeh to Palmyra, which is, of course, absurd; but its real purpose has not yet been discovered. It was probably an aqueduct intended to conduct the water to the Sahra below el Ashrafiyeh, though it ends abruptly near that village, and cannot be traced any farther. It is occasionally used at present as a passage-way between Bessîma and el Ashrafîyeh.

As there is no available path down the valley for several miles, our road here below Bessîma turns to the left and leaves the river, with its refreshing verdure, for a climb up this steep and narrow mountain-gorge. It will lead us to a rocky and sterile plateau called es Sahra, the desert, whose undulating surface, destitute of trees, is everywhere strewn with loose stones and flints, which render it disagreeable both to the horse and his rider.

The Sahra appears to be quite extensive, spreading far away to the north, east, and south, and evidently was never cultivated, nor had it any settled inhabitants.

That is because there is no water. That necessary element of life, which is so abundant in the valley of the river Barada below, cannot be found on this desert plain.

We have had to-day all kinds of scenery, and every variety of soil and production, from the most luxuriant vegetation to this bleak and blasted Sahra. It is, indeed, a region of surprises and marked contrasts in close proximity.

Nor is this the last of them. We will soon begin the descent from this desolate plain towards the river, and there the road winds through cretaceous hills of dazzling whiteness, not a little painful to weak eyes. It will bring us in half an hour to the carriage-road, constructed by the French company, from Beirût to Damascus, and to the substantial bridge over the Barada at the village of Dummar.

How invigorating and refreshing is the sight of this river of Damascus, with its green valley everywhere so full of trees!

Here at Dummar is the first station from Damascus on the Company's road, and the necessary buildings that have been put up contrast very strangely with the miserable houses of the natives, and the so-called villas of wealthy Damascenes. A path from this place leads up the rocky ridge on the left, and many travellers ascend that steep and winding way, in order to obtain their first view of the city and its surroundings from Kubbet en Nŭsr, on the summit of Jebel Kasyûn. It commands the best view of Damascus; and ever since the Muhammedan era that shrine has been associated with the traditional visit of the false prophet to that terrestrial paradise.

It has taken us half an hour to climb up to this place from the bridge at Dummar, and there to the right, on the brow of the eastern ridge, is the white-domed Wely of en Nŭsr. Let us ascend to it and survey the enchanted scene far, far below. Remember that here you are nearly four thousand feet above the sea, and about five hundred feet over the plain and the city, which is at least a mile and a half distant in a straight line—

> This is the place. Stand still, my steed;
> Let me review the scene.[1]

We have passed through the land from Beersheba to Dan, and around the majestic heights of Hermon, and over goodly Lebanon from the Baruk cedars to the lofty peaks above Tripoli; but nowhere has such a glorious vision of verdure burst so suddenly upon us, nor have we ever looked down upon a sight like this.[2]

Let us seek protection from the dazzling glare of these limestone hills in the grateful shade of this Moslem shrine, and from beneath its venerable arches we can gaze with unwearied eyes upon that unequalled prospect—of river and plain and city—which spreads out below us for many miles in all directions. "A greater contrast," says Lieutenant Van de Velde, "than that of the blinding white chalky hills of Anti-Lebanon, and the green oasis of Damascus, of the lone dry rocks, and the finest and most populous city of the East, it is impossible to imagine. A single look from this point

[1] Longfellow's "Gleam of Sunshine." [2] See Frontispiece to this volume.

appears at once to explain the tradition of the Moslems, that Paradise must have been here," and one feels inclined "to sit down and abandon all idea of proceeding farther rather than lose the enjoyment of this ravishing sight. No wonder that the Syrians, with such a city, were a more haughty people than all the nations that surrounded Israel."[1]

"Like the first view of Constantinople," said Mr. Charles G. Addison, forty-five years ago, this of Damascus and its surroundings "is unique, and will bear comparison with no other that I have seen. Conceive our sensations, after journeying through thirsty, dusty plains, and across white, sterile mountains, to find ourselves standing on a lofty ledge of rocks, near the tomb of a sheikh, when one of the most magnificent prospects in the world suddenly burst upon our sight. We looked down from an elevation of more than five hundred feet upon a vast plain, bordered in the distance by blue mountains, and occupied by a rich, luxuriant forest of the walnut, the fig, the pomegranate, the plum, the apricot, the citron, the pear, the apple, and the poplar, forming a waving grove more than thirty miles in circuit; not such a wood as one sees in England, France, or Germany, but possessing a vast variety of tint, a peculiar density and luxuriance of foliage, and a wildly picturesque form, from the branches of the loftier trees throwing themselves up above a rich underwood of pomegranates, citrons, and oranges, with their yellow, green, and brown leaves; and then conceive our sensations to see, grandly rising in the distance above this vast superficies of rich, luxuriant foliage, the swelling leaden domes, the gilded crescents, and the marble minarets of ["the one hundred and one" mosks in] Damascus, while in the centre of all, winding towards the city, ran the main stream of the river Barada."[2]

Though written nearly half a century ago, that graphic description of Mr. Addison's is a perfect pen-and-ink sketch of this beautiful scene upon which we are now gazing from the same stand-point.

But we must not forget the Barada, that "river of Damascus," which is the perennial source of all this luxuriant verdure. After referring to its winding way amongst the sterile hills and through the deep gorge, before it reaches the plain, "visible everywhere by

[1] Syria and Palestine, vol. ii. p. 453. [2] Damascus and Palmyra, vol. ii. p. 59, 60.

its mass of vegetation—willows, poplars, hawthorn, walnut, hanging over a rushing volume of crystal water—the more striking from the contrast of the naked desert in which it is found," Dean Stanley, looking down upon the Barada from this same spot, adds: "The river with its green banks is visible at the bottom, rushing through the cleft; it bursts forth, and, as if in a moment, scatters over the plain, through a circle of thirty miles, the same verdure which had hitherto been confined in its single channel. It is like the bursting of a shell—the eruption of a volcano—but an eruption not of death but of life."[1]

Before and after it issues from the gorge upon the plain the Barada is divided into several canals and strong streams, which are conducted along the borders of the gardens to the right and left; and those again are subdivided into smaller streams, which convey the water to all parts of the plain, so that there is not a garden but has a purling rill of pure water running through it. But the river does not appear to be greatly reduced in volume, and flows on through the plain, passing the wall of the city, where it supplies the fountains in the streets and in the courts of private houses, the cisterns, baths, khâns, mosks, and public buildings. Thus diminished, the Barada meanders through the plain east of Damascus for fifteen miles, and is finally merged in the marshes and the lakes on the verge of the eastern desert.

Tradition affirms that here, at this Kubbet en Nŭsr, the dome of victory, after gazing upon this beautiful scene, the Prophet, then a mere lad and camel-driver from Mecca, exclaimed, "There is but one paradise for man!" and, turning away, he refused to enter Damascus. The "true believers" did not follow the self-sacrificing example of the Prophet, and Damascus to-day is pre-eminently a Muhammedan city, the capital of a Turkish province, and the official residence of the Governor-general of Syria and Palestine.

Let us return to the road and descend to the plain by the ancient highway, a narrow and crooked path, cut in the rock, and winding down the steep hill-side. This mountain-range, on which we have been standing looking down upon the city and over the plain, extends for more than fifty miles in a north-easterly

[1] Sinai and Palestine, p. 405, 406.

direction, and then sinks down into the sandy desert of Palmyra. On the right, and across the deep gorge of the Barada, it rises gradually westward, until it is merged into the grand range of Hermon, thirty miles away. That majestic mountain dominates this whole region, and, from its exalted heights, looks calmly down upon the boundless plain that sweeps round its base and spreads far away to "the hills of Bashan," fifty miles off.

Southward are the parallel ridges of Jebel el Aswad and Jebel el Mâni'a, and between them runs Nahr el A'waj, the ancient Pharpar. It crosses the plain to the south-east, and is lost in the lake on the borders of the desert. Eastward the line of vision is bounded by the distant Tellûl es Sŭfa, a long range of extinct craters, but the plain in other directions seems interminable, and extends farther than the eye can follow. Seen from this elevation, and over so great a distance in all directions, the plain appears to be almost level, but there are great inequalities in it, and in many parts the undulating surface swells up to high hills and higher mountains, some of which are of volcanic origin. The craters, however, are now extinct from whence issued the amazing streams of lava that covered the vast regions of the Haurân.

Jebel Kasyûn, as this part of the mountain-range is called, is bare, steep, and rugged. It rises about one thousand five hundred feet above the city, and forms, in connection with the ridges north and south of it, the western and northern boundary of the plain. Upon its summit is a Wely, or saint's tomb, which commands a more extensive view than Kubbet en Nŭsr. Moslem tradition asserts that on this mountain Adam lived; that in one of its caverns Cain hid the body of Abel, and that the very rocks, which in some places are of a reddish color, were thus stained by the blood of his murdered brother. Here, according to the same authority, Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, lived, in a cave, until he was fifty years old; and here he forsook his idols for the worship of the one and only true God.

We have now reached the village of es Sâlihîyeh, at the base of Jebel Kasyûn. It is the largest suburb of Damascus, and here are to be seen the summer residences of many wealthy Damascenes.

This broad and well-paved road, bordered with large walnut

and other trees, and having a foot-path on either side, is the only one of the kind we have seen in Syria.

It will lead us, in less than half an hour, to one of the city gates, and from there we will go direct to the hotel, leaving for another occasion the many objects of interest which attract and distract our attention as we ride along the garden-walls under the grateful shade of these large walnut-trees. It is not always safe to encamp out in the suburbs of this city, and it will be pleasant to exchange, for a while, the inconveniences of tent life for the comforts of a well-conducted hotel.

X.

DAMASCUS.

Damascus and the Manners and Customs of the East.—One of the Oldest Cities in the World.—Thebes and Memphis, Babylon and Nineveh.—Damascus the Capital of Syria.—Biblical History of Damascus.—Abraham and Chedorlaomer.—Hobah.—Dammesek, Dimeshk.—Esh Shâm.—Damascus Founded by the Great Grandson of Noah.—Josephus and Nicolaus.—Abraham Reigned at Damascus.—Eliezer of Damascus.—Abraham's Place of Adoration.—Burzeh.—The Site of Hobah.—David.—The Tribes of Naphtali and Manasseh.—"David put Garrisons in Damascus."—Hadad.—Solomon.—Rezon.—Abijam King of Judah; Tabrimon of Syria; and Baasha of Israel.—Asa Sends Presents of Silver and Gold.—Invasions of Ben-hadad I., King of Damascus.—"Streets in Samaria."—Ben-hadad II.—Ahab.—Invasions of Ben-hadad II.—Aphek.—Flight of Ben-hadad II.—"Streets in Damascus."—Death of Ahab.—Jehoram.—Naaman the Syrian Leper.—"A Little Captive Maid."—Jehoram Rends his Clothes.—Elisha, "a Prophet in Israel."—The Jordan and the "Rivers of Damascus."—The "Blessing" of Naaman.—Two Mules' Burden of Earth.—An Altar to Jehovah in Damascus.—Ben-hadad's Attempt to Capture Elisha.—Siege of Samaria.—"A Great Famine."—Flight of the Syrian Army.—The Hittite Confederacy.—Elijah and Elisha.—Visit of Elisha to Damascus.—Death of Ben-hadad.—Hazael King over Syria.—"Joash Beat Ben-hadad [III.] three times."—Jeroboam II. Recovers Damascus.—Pekah.—Tiglath-pileser Captures Damascus.—Pattern of an Altar sent to Urijah by Ahaz.—Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and Darius.—Amos and Isaiah.—Jeremiah and Ezekiel.—Zechariah.—Macedonian, Greek, and Roman Conquests.—Parmenio.—Alexander the Great.—Pompey Receives the Ambassadors from Syria, Judæa, and Egypt in Damascus.—Sextus Cæsar.—Herod the Great.—Saul, called Paul.—Spread of Christianity in Damascus.—John the Baptist.—Muhammedan Conquest of Syria.—Siege of Damascus.—Gibbon.—Massacre of Christians by the "Sword of God."—Damascus the Capital of the Muhammedan Empire.—Baneful Influence of Islam.—Decline of Damascus.—Descendants of Ishmael.—A Hebrew of the Hebrews.—Garments Ancient and Modern.—Hotel at Damascus.—Citron and Lemon, Roses and Jessamine.—Court of the Khâlifs of Islâm.—The King and Queen of the "Arabian Nights."—The Streets and Bazaars of Damascus.—The Horse-market.—The Hangman's Tree.—Saddlers Street.—Street of the Coppersmiths.—Castle of Damascus.—Ancient Bows and Arrows.—The Fosse.—Street of the Auctioneers.—Sûk el Arwâm.—Oriental Bargains.—Given Away for Nothing.—Intricacy of the

Streets in Eastern Cities.—Donkeys and Camels.—Khân As'ad Pasha.—Caravans from Bagdad and Elsewhere.—Importunate Christians.—Intense Fanaticism.—A Moslem Shopkeeper.—Fate, or God's Decree.—The Wiles of Satan.—Sanctimonious Moslems.—Bazaar of the Goldsmiths.—Manufacture of Gold and Silver Filigree.—South Side of the Great Mosk.—Ancient Remains.—Triple Gate.—Greek Inscription.—"Thy Kingdom, O Christ."—Book Bazaar.—Copies of the Korân.—Manuscript Books.—Arch and Pediment of an Ancient Gateway.—Bâb el Barîd.—Slippers.—"The House of Rimmon."—Greek and Roman Temple.—Church of St. John the Baptist.—A Basilica.—Dimensions of the Great Mosk.—Rows of Columns.—Triple Roof.—Central Dome.—Stained-glass Windows.—Texts from the Korân.—Praying Rugs.—Lamps and Chandeliers.—Praying Niches.—The Head of John the Baptist.—Court of the Great Mosk.—Colonnades.—Ornamented Piers and Arches.—Corinthian Columns.—Saracenic Fountain and Pavilion.—Domes of the Hour, and of the Treasure.—Visit to the Great Mosk by a Party of Ladies and Gentlemen.—Photographs.—Minarets of the Great Mosk.—View from the Gallery of Mâdinet el 'Arûs.—Rimmon.—Baal.—Tombs of Saladin and the Mameluke Sultan of Egypt.—Public Baths.—Baths not mentioned in the Bible.—"Pools."—Hot and Cold Water Baths Introduced by Herod the Great.—Baths the Resort of Evil Spirits.—Street Calls and Cries.—"Drink, O Thirsty!"—The Colporteur in Damascus.—"The Bread and Water of Everlasting Life."—Private Houses in Damascus.—The Entrance.—The Court.—The Marble Fountain.—El Lewân.—Reception-rooms.—Panels in the Roofs and Window-shutters Inlaid with Mother-of-pearl.—The Harêm.—Coffee-shops along the Banks of the Barada.—Oriental Music and Singing.—The Orchestra.—Musical Instruments.—Greek and Albanian Music.—Biblical Music.—Music in the Time of the Prophets.—Samuel and Saul.—Saul among the Prophets.—Elisha and the Minstrel.—David and Saul.—The Harp and Viol, the Tabret and Pipe.—Ride through the Suburbs of Damascus.—The Gardens.—Canon Tristram.—Flowing Streams and Golden Fruit.—Camping in a Garden.—Canal of et Taurah.—Es Sâlihîyeh.—Villa of the British Consul.—Exuberant Vegetation.—The Myrtle.—Fountains and Streams in the Gardens, and in the Courts of Public and Private Buildings.—Making Kaif under the Trees.—Nahr el Yezîd.—Jebel Kasyûn.—The Barada, the Abana.—The A'waj, the Pharpar.—Bardines.—The Golden-flowing River.—Chasm of the Barada.—Dams and Canals.—Net-work of Watercourses.—The Main Stream of the Barada.—Lake 'Ataibeh.—Cufic Inscription.—Carriage-road.—Mud Walls.—Sun-dried Bricks.—El Merj, the Meadow.—Speeding the Departing, and Welcoming the Coming.—Caravans and Pilgrims.—The Haj.—Et Tekîyeh.—Hospital for Poor Pilgrims.—Mosk of Sultân Selîm.—Muhammedan Burying-ground.—Graves of Muhammed's Wives.—Fâtimeh.—The Myrtle and the Palm.—Funeral Mourning.—Mary at the Grave.—Hired Mourners.—Biblical References to Mourning.—Esau and Job.—David and Jeremiah.—Floods of Tears.—"Jesus Wept."—Tear Bottles.—Smiting the Thigh.—El Meidân.—Labyrinth of Crooked Lanes.—Bâb es Saghîr.—Moslem Funeral Procession.—"That Eternal Truth and Necessary Fiction."—Ancient Stones in the City Wall.—Bâb Kisân.—Traditional Place of Paul's Escape.—Christian Cemeteries.—Spot where Paul was Converted.—Bâb esh Shŭrky.—Extensive View from the Top of a Mound.—Throwing Dust in the Eyes of European Commissioners.—

Leper Hospital.— House of Naaman the Leper.— Leprosy in Damascus.— Roman Triple Gate.—Saracenic Tower.—Gates of Damascus.—"The Street called Straight." —Double Colonnade Described by Dr. Porter.—Christian Quarter.—Armenian Convent.— Syrian and Greek Catholic Churches.— House of Ananias.—The Jews in Damascus, Ancient and Modern.—The Jewish Synagogue.—Paul Preached in the Synagogues at Damascus.—The Orthodox Greek Church.—Massacre of the Christians in 1860.—The Moslem Quarter.—Damascus Blades and Damask Silks.—Population of Damascus.—House of Judas.—Locks and Keys.—Key on the Shoulder.—Locks and Keys in the Time of David and Solomon.—Sûk el 'Attârîn.—Attar of Roses.—Dr. Beke.—Rev. J. Crawford.—Extent of the Damascus Gardens Eastward.—The Eastern Plain Destitute of Trees.—Licorice Plant.—Villages on the Plain.—The Barada.—Hârrân el 'Awamîd.—The Southern Lake.—Bedawîn.—Columns of Basalt. —Remains of an Ancient Temple.—Greek Inscription.—The Biblical Haran.—Pursuit of Jacob by Laban.—Hârrân el 'Awamîd and Mount Gilead.—Tradition of the Jews.—Return to Damascus.

Sunday, September 14th. Evening.

DAMASCUS has preserved the manners and customs of the East better than any other city in Syria, and they have been continued unchanged from generation to generation down to our own day. Here they can be seen and examined to the greatest advantage.

Where there is so much to claim attention one is at a loss to know where to begin.

It will be most satisfactory to gain, at the outset, a general idea of Damascus, its history, and its surroundings, and we cannot do better than devote this evening to that special purpose. Though I would not venture to assert that Damascus is the oldest city in the world, yet it may safely be said that no other city has had so long and persistent an existence. The ancient cities in the valley of the Nile, and of the Euphrates—Thebes and Memphis, Babylon and Nineveh—long since ceased to exist, and are now only known by their vast ruins and mounds of shapeless rubbish ; yet Damascus is still the capital of nearly all Syria, and the most populous and flourishing city of the East.

Is it known when and by whom Damascus was founded?

This city is first alluded to in the Bible during the time of Abraham, when it was so well known as to be mentioned, in the brief account of that patriarch's pursuit of Chedorlaomer, in order to define the position of "Hobah, which is on the left-hand [or north] of Damascus."[1] Its ancient Hebrew name, Dammesek, is the same

[1] Gen. xiv. 15.

as the present Arabic one, Dimeshk, but it is commonly called by the natives esh Shâm, the general name for Syria, meaning left or north, and by all Arab writers Dimeshk esh Shâm, Damascus of Syria. Josephus informs us that it was founded by Uz, the son of Aram, the grandson of Shem, and the great-grandson of Noah.[1] He appears to accept the tradition recorded by the historian Nicolaus, that Abraham came with an army from the land of the Chaldeans and reigned at Damascus, but after a long time he removed and went into the land of Canaan. "The name of Abram," he adds, "is even still famous in the country of Damascus; and there is shown a village named from him The Habitation of Abram."[2]

There is no reason to believe that Abraham ever reigned over Damascus; but, as this city lay on the line of his migration "from Ur of the Chaldees into the land of Canaan," it is quite possible that he may have tarried a considerable time in this neighborhood.[3] His steward, whom at one time he thought would be his heir, was Eliezer of Damascus, one born in his house, implying that his parents were members of Abraham's household at the time of his sojourn in this region.[4] Mesjid Ibrahîm, Abraham's place of adoration, a sacred shrine venerated for the past eight centuries, was erected upon the spot where, according to tradition, the patriarch built an altar and gave thanks to God for his victory over "Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him."[5] It is at Burzeh, a village an hour to the north-east of this city, which is said, by an Arab historian, to mark the site of Hobah.

After the time of Abraham there is no further notice of Damascus in the Bible until the reign of David—a period of nearly eight hundred and seventy-five years. The possessions of the tribe of Naphtali, and those of Manasseh east of the Jordan, bordered upon the territory of Damascus, and the relations between the two peoples during those long, silent centuries appear to have been generally amicable. But when David "became one of the great men of the earth" he began to extend his power and his dominions, and "as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates" he was brought into hostile collision with "the Syrians of Damascus," who "came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah. David slew of the

[1] Ant., i. 6, 4. [2] Ant., i. 7, 2. [3] Gen. xi. 31. [4] Gen. xv. 1-4. [5] Gen. xiv. 17.

Syrians two and twenty thousand men." He also "put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts."[1] At that time, according to Josephus and Nicholaus, Hadad, a great king, ruled over Damascus and other parts of Syria, and his "posterity reigned for ten generations."[2]

The conquest of David, and the tributary condition of the Syrians of Damascus, lasted only during his lifetime; for when Solomon came to the throne Rezon, a servant of the former King of Zobah, and a "captain over a band" of robbers, in all probability became "an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon."[3] He came to Damascus and dwelt there and ruled over it; but, being an adventurer and usurper, Rezon was probably soon expelled from this city, and it again became the seat of the Hadad dynasty. After the revolt of the ten tribes there was a league between Abijam, King of Judah, and Tabrimon, King of Syria, and between Baasha, King of Israel, and Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimon, who succeeded his father and dwelt at Damascus. It was to this Ben-hadad I. that Asa sent presents of silver and gold from the treasures of the house of the Lord and from the king's house, saying, "Come and break thy league with Baasha, King of Israel, that he may depart from me." Ben-hadad took the presents and sent his captains "against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-beth-maachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali."[4]

Incidentally we learn, from 1 Kings xx. 34, that Ben-hadad I. again invaded Israel, and took many cities, and established "streets in Samaria" for the purpose of trade and traffic between the merchants of Damascus and the inhabitants of that city. His son, Ben-hadad II., during the reign of Ahab, "gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria." The account of his arrogant demands and their rejection by Ahab; of the battle and the great slaughter of the Syrians, of the flight of Ben-hadad and his horsemen, is given in the twentieth chapter of 1 Kings. "At the return of the year Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel. The battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians a hundred thousand foot-

[1] 2 Sam. viii. 3-6. [2] Ant., vii. 5, 2. [3] 1 Kings xi. 23-25. [4] 1 Kings xv. 16-20.

men in one day." Ben-hadad again fled and hid himself, but was prevailed upon by his servants to surrender to Ahab, who received him as a brother. "And Ben-hadad said unto him, The cities which my father took from thy father I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away."[1]

Three years after that Ahab is the aggressor, and the preparations for the encounter with Ben-hadad, and the fatal result to the King of Israel, are eminently Biblical, and given at length in the last chapter of 1 Kings. After the death of Ahab there was a short interval of peace. Ahaziah, his son, fell through a lattice at Samaria, and "so he died;" and Jehoram his brother "reigned in his stead."[2] Then occurred one of those most interesting episodes in Biblical history, abounding in striking and instructive illustrations of the state of society at that remote period. Naaman, the Syrian, of Damascus, was a great captain: "he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper." At the earnest solicitation of "a little captive maid out of the land of Israel," he came to Samaria. He brought ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment, and a letter from Ben-hadad to Jehoram, saying, "Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy." The king read the letter, rent his clothes, and exclaimed, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?" When Elisha heard of it he remonstrated with the king for having rent his clothes. "Let him come now to me," said he, "and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."[3]

But the story is too familiar to need repetition. Every one can remember the indignant and contemptuous reply of the great captain to the prophet's command, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times." "Are not," he exclaims, "Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? So he turned and went away in a rage." It is worthy of note, however, that, after he had "dipped in Jordan, and was clean," and when the prophet refused his "blessing," as Naaman called his gift, the latter asked

[1] 1 Kings xx. 1, 26–34. [2] 2 Kings i. 2, 17. [3] 2 Kings v. 1-8.

that "two mules' burden of earth" be given to him with which to build an altar here in Damascus, and "offer burnt offering and sacrifice unto the Lord."[1] Naaman had, probably, been informed that "an altar of earth," and "not of hewn stone," was necessary to the worship of Jehovah, and hence his request.[2]

This interchange of friendly relations was soon interrupted, for Ben-hadad again invaded Israel, and endeavored to capture Elisha; but the attempt failed, and the host sent for that purpose were smitten with blindness, and led into Samaria by the prophet himself.[3] "After this Ben-hadad gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria." Then occurred that "great" and memorable famine when "an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver," and children were eaten by their own parents. The city was saved by divine interposition, for "the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life."[4] Recent investigations explain the reason for that panic and the precipitate flight of Ben-hadad's army. The Hittite confederacy was one of the most powerful military organizations in Western Asia, and at that time it was in alliance with the Egyptians.

Ben-hadad made no farther attempts upon Samaria after that remarkable panic and flight of his army from before its walls. He appears to have been engaged, to the close of his reign, in repelling the invasions of the Assyrians, who sought to extend their power over Syria and Palestine. It was during that period of comparative peace between Syria and Israel that "Elisha came to Damascus." He visited this city apparently to fulfil one of the three commands of the Lord to Elijah when in the cave on Mount Sinai. There "the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt

[1] 2 Kings v. 9–19.
[2] Exod. xx. 24, 25.
[3] 2 Kings vi. 8–23.
[4] 2 Kings vi. 24, 25; vii. 6, 7.

thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room."[1] Elijah seems to have taken a large liberty in the manner of carrying out those various commands. He did not go to Damascus at all, nor did he, personally, anoint either Hazael or Jehu. He "found Elisha and cast his mantle upon him;" that is, he invested him with the prophetic office by that symbolic act; and Elisha "arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him."[2]

Elisha was now a prophet "in the room" of Elijah, and at the time of his visit to Damascus "Ben-hadad the king was sick;" so he sent Hazael to meet him, with "a present of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden." And he "came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?" In that interview, while assuring Hazael that the king would surely die, Elisha fixed his gaze steadfastly upon him until Hazael "was ashamed: and the man of God wept." "And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord?" Elisha replied that God had shown him that he would be king over Syria, and that he would inflict terrible calamities upon Israel. Upon which Hazael exclaims, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?"[3] Well might the prophet weep, for Hazael murdered his master on the following morning, usurped the throne, and, during a long reign of about forty-six years, desolated the country east of the Jordan, "oppressed Israel," and even threatened Jerusalem, enacting all the atrocities which Elisha foresaw and predicted.

But "the Lord had compassion" upon the Israelites, "neither cast he them from his presence as yet." He gave them a saviour in the person of Joash, King of Israel, who beat Ben-hadad III., the son of Hazael, three times, "and recovered the cities of Israel."[4] We read also, in 2 Kings xiv. 27, 28, that Jeroboam II., the son and successor of Joash, "recovered Damascus and Hamath;" and after that, in the days "of Pekah the son of Remaliah," the King of Damascus appears as an ally of Israel against Judah. "So Ahaz sent to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, Come up and save me."

[1] 1 Kings xix. 15, 16.
[2] 1 Kings xix. 19–21.
[3] 2 Kings viii. 7–15.
[4] 2 Kings xiii. 22–25.

And he "went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin."[1] Ahaz also came to this city, and here saw an altar, a pattern of which he sent to Urijah, who made one like it, and set it up in the Temple at Jerusalem.[2] Thus ran the checkered history of those rival nations until Damascus and Israel were overwhelmed in succession by the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians, under Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and Darius, on the north, and the Egyptians on the south. Then was fulfilled the prophecy of Amos, and that of Isaiah. A fire devoured "the palaces of Ben-hadad," "and the kingdom [ceased] from Damascus." "Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap;" and the captives of Samaria were "carried into Assyria, and placed by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."[3]

In the days of Jeremiah, about 600 B.C., Damascus had "waxed feeble;" and Ezekiel alludes to its former prosperity and commercial relations with Tyre.[4] One hundred years later it is mentioned by Zechariah, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity.[5] Then came the Macedonian, Greek, and Roman conquests, breaking and fusing all separate nationalities into one vast empire. During those centuries of turmoil and strife Damascus, though it recovered some of its ancient glory and again became a rich and flourishing city, had no independent existence, nor any history of special importance. After the defeat of Darius at the battle of Issus, B.C. 333, Damascus surrendered to Parmenio, the general of Alexander the Great, and with it the family and treasures of the Persian monarch. Here, according to Josephus, Pompey received ambassadors from Syria, and Judea, and Egypt; and here Sextus Cæsar bestowed the government of Cœlesyria upon Herod the Great, who afterwards built a gymnasium and theatre in this city.[6] And hither came "Saul (who also is called Paul), breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord."[7]

At the beginning of our era Damascus was one of the many large and prospering cities subject to Roman rule, and during the

[1] 2 Kings xvi. 5–9.
[2] 2 Kings xvi. 10–16.
[3] Amos i. 3, 4; Isa. xvii. 1; 2 Kings xvii. 6.
[4] Jer. xlix. 23–27; Ezek. xxvii. 18.
[5] Zech. ix. 1.
[6] Ant., xiv. 3, 1; 9, 5; B. J., i. 21, 11.
[7] Acts ix. 1–3; xiii. 9.

following centuries Christianity spread rapidly amongst its inhabitants. Under the Byzantine Empire this city was the seat of a bishop, and its ancient heathen temple was converted into a Christian church and dedicated to St. John the Baptist. For more than two centuries after that Damascus continued to prosper, until at the time of the Muhammedan conquest it was one of the first cities of the Eastern Empire.

In the year 634, after defeating the army of the Emperor Heraclius on the plain of Hums, the Arabs besieged Damascus, this ancient capital of Syria. The siege lasted seventy days, and then the city surrendered, and most of the inhabitants were allowed to withdraw. According to Gibbon, they were pursued by Khâlid, "the Sword of God," with four squadrons of cavalry, and "not a Christian of either sex escaped the edge of their scymitars." The remaining inhabitants of the city became the tributary subjects of the conquerors, and seven places of worship were allotted to them, and half of the church of St. John. Towards the close of the seventh century Damascus rose, for a time, to great prominence as the capital of the Muhammedan Empire, which soon extended to India on the east, and the Atlantic Ocean on the west. Although this city has enjoyed periods of great prosperity during the past twelve centuries of Moslem rule, yet the baneful influence of Islâm, here, as elsewhere, has been depressing and destructive. It is impossible to ruin a city so favorably located as Damascus; still, it has notably declined in many important respects—in the variety and perfection of its manufactures, the extent and value of its commerce, and in the wealth and refinement of its inhabitants.

As Damascus has retained its individuality during a period of about four thousand years, and as it is of all Eastern cities the most Oriental, one naturally expects to find that not only have the manners and customs of ancient times remained unchanged, but that its present inhabitants have come down from the earliest ages.

Would you seek acquaintance with the descendants of Ishmael? They are to be seen in every bazaar, with their swarthy complexion, sharp features, and lithe and slender figures, clad in simple but primitive garments, very much like those worn by Abraham and they of his household when sojourning in this vicinity. Do you

wish to see a veritable "Hebrew of the Hebrews"—a son of "Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob?" You will find groups of them in the Jewish quarter of the city, with fair countenance and bright eyes, curling locks and flowing beards, servile expression and obsequious manner, clothed in much the same style and costume as their forefathers. You cannot name an article of their dress, from head to foot, but that you there behold only the modernized form and fashion of its ancient shape and size, for the Jews of Damascus have adhered with great tenacity to the manners, the customs, and the costumes of their ancestors. During our stay in this city you will be constantly reminded that we are still in the land of the Bible, and that Damascus furnishes, in many respects, the best living illustrations of the Holy Book that are now to be found in any part of the Promised Land.

September 15th.

This hotel—with its paved quadrangular court in the centre, marble fountains, running water, orange, citron, and lemon trees, rose-bushes, trailing jessamine-vines, and blooming shrubs, its open lewâns, spacious and lofty rooms on the ground floor, and smaller ones above, with winding stairs, rambling verandas, and projecting balconies—transfers us, almost by enchantment, into the realm of Oriental story and amid the scenes of the "Arabian Nights."

Ever since the wealthy and pleasure-loving Khâlifs, the successors of the great prophet of Islâm, assumed the supremacy over their more refined Christian subjects and established their court at Damascus, this city has been admirably adapted to illustrate those Oriental romances of the happy king, Shahriyâr, and his faithful queen, Shahrazâr. And to-day many a house within the city walls, and a garden in the suburbs, is the palace and the grove in miniature of a Moslem Khâlif equally minute, though none the less malevolent, than the famous vicars of Muhammed. We will let our horses rest to-day, and allow the muleteers the opportunity to have their animals re-shod, while we visit the bazaars of the city. There are many places of special interest within the walls of Damascus, besides its shops and streets, and we will, therefore, direct our steps to Khân As'ad Pasha, passing through several of the principal bazaars on the way to that celebrated caravansary.

In this large open space which we are crossing horses are collected from the desert and elsewhere and offered for sale, on certain days of the week. Some of them are in a semi-wild state, and present a shaggy and uncouth appearance, while others are said to be of the famous Arabian breeds raised by the Bedawîn of the 'Anazeh tribe. That large plane-tree is one of the sights of Damascus. The trunk is nearly forty feet in circumference, and one of its branches is occasionally used as a gallows. Here are the shops and stalls for the sale of barley, and farther on is the saddle market. There you will find saddles of all shapes and sizes, from the hard pack, stuffed with straw, to the crimson cloth and gold-embroidered saddle of the Effendi and the Pasha. And there, too, are seen girths of every description, and saddle-cloths of gaudy colors and various patterns; broad, shovel-shaped stirrups, and silver-spangled bridles with clumsy ring bits, and trappings and tassels for the horses of the Bedawîn. This clatter of many hammers proceeds from the shops of the coppersmiths. Here are made basins and ewers, pots and pans, cups and kettles, colanders, and other kitchen utensils. Those large copper trays—some of them nearly five feet in diameter—are, in fact, used as tables, upon which the dishes are placed and around which the guests seat themselves on the floor. They are often adorned with elaborate calligraphical designs and complicated texts from the Korân.

The castle, on the opposite side of the street, is a large, quadrangular fortress, nearly nine hundred feet long and seven hundred feet wide. From its great height, and many projecting towers, and the surrounding moat—twenty feet broad, and fifteen feet deep—it presents a formidable appearance. The interior, however, is in a ruinous condition, and only a few vaults are occupied. Some of them chiefly contain bows and arrows, old armor, and other military rubbish. It is said to have been built by Melek el Ashraf, about A.D. 1219, but this can only imply that he rebuilt the fortress upon the foundations of a former one, for the substructions are evidently ancient, and probably Roman. The main branch of the Barada flows along the north wall of the castle, and its waters could be let into the fosse, the bottom of which is now covered with reeds.

Leaving these jabbering and importunate auctioneers to dispose

of their second-hand garments, old-fashioned weapons, and copper trays to the highest bidder, we will pass through Sûk el Arwâm, or the Street of the Greeks. Here are dealers in all sorts of Oriental articles, mostly gaudy and trashy, and not worth a quarter of the price asked for them: tobacco-bags of various colors, embroidered in silver and gold; long pipe-stems encased in blue, green, and crimson silk, bound with gold braid and ornamented with brilliant tassels suspended from the middle of the stems, and adorned with amber mouthpieces six inches long. These persistent dealers offer you, "for nothing," a cloth suit, a red fez, a shawl, a dagger, or a so-called "Damascus blade," bright-colored socks, or a carpet to say your prayers upon — and all "without money and without price." If you accept on those terms they will expect a present of at least twice the value of the goods thus "given away."

"It is the most difficult thing in the world," says an Oriental traveller, "to find one's way about a populous Eastern town, from the intricacy of the streets and the many winding bazaars, which are so very confusing. Sometimes you are pushed into a corner for several minutes and spattered with mud by a string of donkeys, who trot heedlessly and with noiseless tread over the dirty pavement; and sometimes you are nearly knocked down and run over by a string of camels, who take up the whole passage between the shop-boards on which the goods are exposed for sale, and whose soft, spongy feet make no sound to warn one of the approaching danger." Fortunately for us, we have at last reached this great khân without encountering anything more formidable in these bazaars than motley crowds of men, women, and children buying and selling, and occasionally an Effendi on horseback.

This khân belongs to the family of As'ad Pasha, by whom it was built nearly one hundred years ago. He was the Governor of Damascus for fifteen years, and is said to have been an upright man and a public benefactor. The main entrance is grand and very striking—one of the finest specimens of Arabian architecture in this country—and the stone carving above the lofty gateway and around the stalactite vaults is of the most elaborate character. The khân was constructed of black basalt and white limestone in alternate layers, and is about two hundred feet square. The interior court is

half that size, with a large, round fountain in the centre, above which is a lofty dome resting upon four arches, each supported by four clustered pillars. These are connected with the walls by a series of similar arches and domes—eight in all. Those domes have each sixteen large windows, through which light, air, and sunshine penetrate to the rooms and the court below. Around the sides of the court are vaulted magazines of various sizes for the disposal of merchandise of every description at wholesale.

On either side of the main entrance a staircase leads up to an arched corridor, which extends quite around the building, and communicates with the small retail shops and offices of the merchants. It forms a fine promenade, from where one can look down upon the strange and truly Oriental scenes in the court below, free from the noise and confusion which there characterize every commercial transaction, large or small. To Khân As'ad Pasha come caravans from Bagdad, Mosul, Aleppo, Beirût, and elsewhere. On entering, the muleteers and camel-drivers, with mighty din and uproar, throw down their loads of merchandise in this court, and here they must remain until the owners settle with the custom-house officials.

The janissary of the consulate has come to conduct us from this khân to the Great Mosk. He will obtain admission for us, and insure proper respect from the custodians of that sacred edifice. We will now leave the khân and pass through some of the bazaars which you have not yet seen.

I have noticed with surprise the difference in the demeanor of the shopkeepers towards their customers. The Christians are officious and importunate; the Moslems, on the other hand, are indifferent, contemptuous, and even insolent.

The Moslems of Damascus number more than four-fifths of its inhabitants, and their intense fanaticism is notorious; hence their arrogant treatment of all unbelievers. Christians are infidel dogs, and Jews are curs of the lowest degree, while all Europeans are generally regarded as Russians, with whom the Sultân is supposed to be at war. Amongst themselves, however, Muhammedans are respectful, and treat each other with extreme deference, even in matters of the smallest concern.

A Moslem shopkeeper is a religious phenomenon wonderful to

behold, whose faith is as necessary to him as his food or his raiment. Proceeding with solemn step through the street, he strokes his beard at every turn, muttering short ejaculations of praise to God and prayer for his almighty aid. Arriving at his shop, he unlocks the shutters, exclaiming, "O thou Opener of all things, and Knower of all things!" and ascends to his seat, upon a quilted mattress, about a yard square. Placing his shoes out of sight, and filling his pipe, he reclines against a large, soft cushion, and complacently strokes his beard or plays with his beads while patiently awaiting the customer whom fate or God's decree may send him. If his customer be a Jew or Christian, he "takes refuge in God from the wiles of Satan;" for according to the nature of that first "opening" transaction will his business during the day be fortunate or otherwise. If the amount of the purchase is satisfactory, he praises God for having diverted the money of an infidel into the hands of a true believer; but should the amount be insignificant, he calls upon the Enricher of all, the most merciful God, to dispel his ominous ill-luck by sending him another customer of a more promising countenance and longer purse.

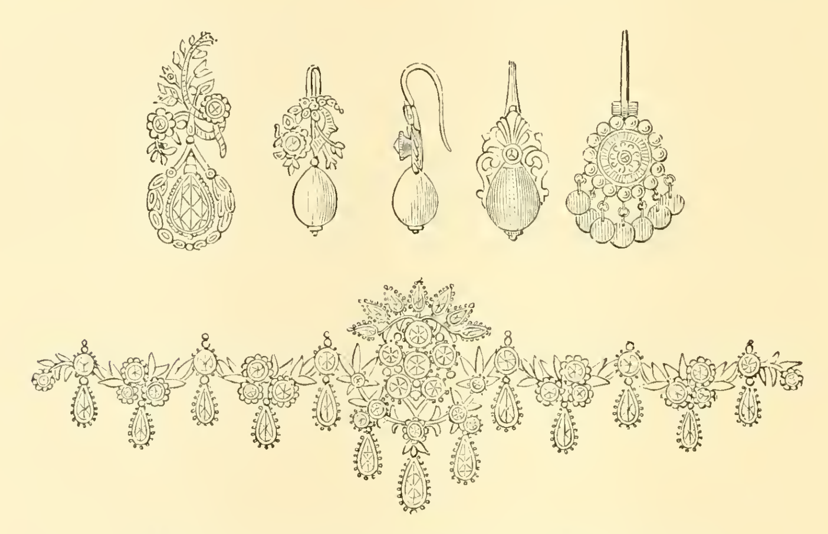
The infidels are common victims, and to cheat and abuse them is the special prerogative of all true believers. It is astonishing to see a Moslem, at the close of a wrangling bargain with a Christian or a Jew—during which the buyer has been cheated in quality, quantity, and price, and roughly dealt with—suddenly betake himself to his prayers, perform them in a most solemn and abstracted manner, and immediately thereafter engage in a similar scene over some petty purchase worth only a few piastres. A thousand times in the day is the name of God invoked to confirm the lying statement of the seller in regard to the article offered to the buyer, and this taking of "the name of God in vain" has continued unchanged from the time of Moses down to the present day.

We have now reached the bazaar of the goldsmiths, and are in the vicinity of the Great Mosk. After examining some of their handiwork we will ascend to the dilapidated roof of this bazaar, from where we can obtain a view of the exterior of the mosk. Here you will be shown a great variety of ornaments in silver or gold and in delicate filigree work, many of them quite beautiful, for

the head, the ears, the neck, the arms, the fingers, and even for the nose and ankles of the Bedawîn women. There are also brilliant sprays of diamonds, and a great profusion of pearls, coral, amber, and costly gems to tempt the wealthy.

Where do they keep all those treasures which you have enumerated? I see nothing but a row of dingy stalls, with one or two men and as many boys in each, apparently trying to melt something in a crucible over a common blow-pipe.

The jewelry and precious stones are kept in tin cases, locked up in those ordinary wooden boxes which you see in the stalls, and



DIAMOND, PEARL, AND GOLD EAR-RINGS.—DIAMOND NECKLACE.

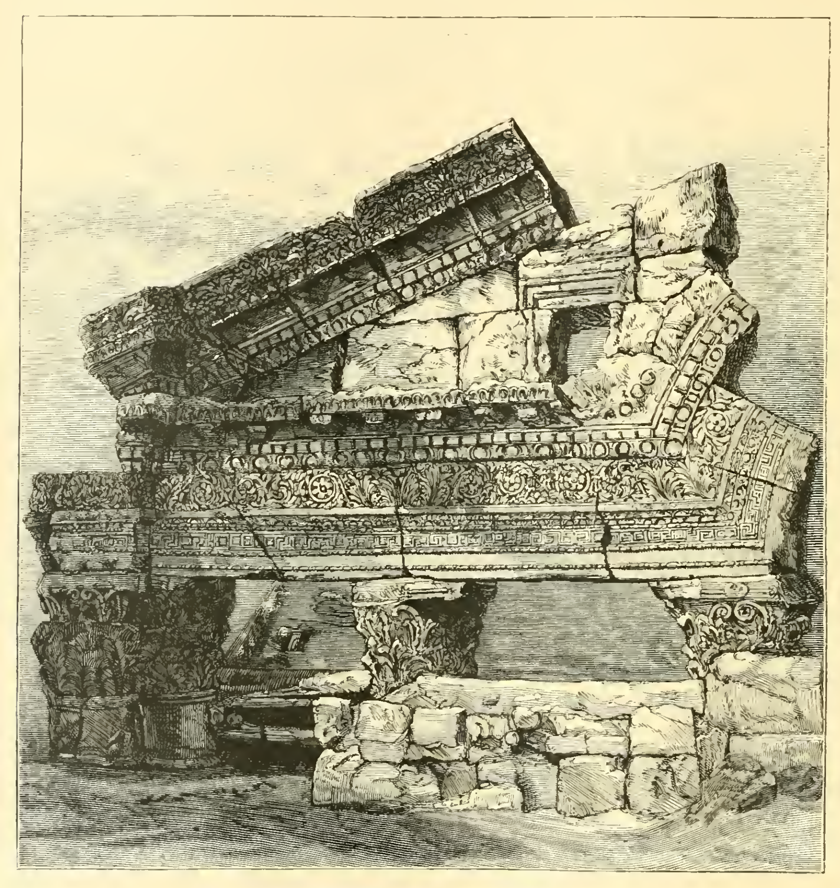
they are exhibited with great care to an intending purchaser. The stalls are generally raised nearly four feet above the street, and are about seven feet square. The entire furniture consists of one or two mats or carpets and the same number of quilted mattresses and soft cushions. The stock in trade is placed in the tin cases and strong wooden boxes, and the principal machinery used is comprised in the following list: a hammer, anvil, hole in the floor or forge; an oil-lamp, a crucible, a blow-pipe, and a small, flat, and smooth piece of charcoal; a shears, pincers, and a piece of iron or steel, with holes of various sizes, through which the gold or silver

wire is drawn. Thus equipped, one of these jewellers will make a pair of ear-rings in gold filigree work from an Oriental design, or from any other which may be given to him; and the process is very simple. A rude sketch is made; the gold wire, drawn to the requisite thickness, is cut into the necessary pieces; these are shaped to conform to the design, then placed in position on the flat piece of charcoal, a pinch of solder is dusted over them, and a boy with the blow-pipe is brought into requisition. That primitive manufacturing process is repeated until the design is complete, and then comes finishing and polishing, and the ear-rings are done. They are weighed, and to the value of the gold the jeweller adds the price of his labor, and the result is the entire cost of the ear-rings.

A bakhshish has unlocked this side-door, and we may now ascend to the roof of the bazaar. From here we get a good view of the south side of the mosk—its windows, minarets, sloping roofs, and central dome. A part of the wall at the south-western angle, the remains of the gate near the southern transept, and the round arches of the windows on either side and above the present main entrance, sufficiently indicate the Greek and Roman origin of this Moslem mosk and former church of St. John the Baptist. If we had time and opportunity we could approach nearer to the wall of the mosk and examine these ancient remains, especially those of the triple gate, which are almost entirely concealed by the walls of this bazaar. The western arch is hidden from sight, but part of the central and eastern arches rise above the line of those roofs.

During one of my earliest visits to this place, in company with some missionary friends, we found a Greek inscription high up in the wall, and above the central gateway, which to us was a new discovery, as we supposed it had not been seen by any traveller. Procuring a ladder, we succeeded, with some difficulty, in copying it. It is now well known, and being interpreted reads as follows: "Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations," taken from the thirteenth verse of the one hundred and forty-fifth Psalm, with the name of Christ interpolated. It was evidently intended for the gateway leading into the enclosure of the church, probably for the lintel of the entrance through which the Christians had access to

their part of the edifice during the time of its partial occupation by them and the Moslems. It is surprising that Muhammedan fanaticism has allowed it to remain there for more than twelve hundred years, and has not long since effaced and removed it from the sacred precincts of this their grandest mosk in the city of Damascus.



ARCH AND PEDIMENT OF AN ANCIENT GATEWAY.

From the bazaar of the goldsmiths we have now found our way into that of the booksellers. Copies of the Korân, beautifully illuminated, were occasionally found in the shops, but in these days a good manuscript copy can only be obtained secretly and by paying a high price for it. The magic energy of the printing-press will ere

long altogether supersede the laborious methods of the copyist, and even now but few manuscript books of special value are exposed for sale in these stalls. Here is another side-door, which the same amount of bakhshîsh will unlock, and from the terrace of this private house we can examine the remains of an ancient gateway in front of the western entrance to the Great Mosk. Those four massive columns are all that can be seen of it here in the street.

What we now see rising above the roof of the bazaar is a portion of the arch and pediment of the gateway, supported by three columns with Corinthian capitals. The one at the end is composed of a square pier of masonry, with a semi-column on the inner and outer side. The cornice, arch, and pediment are profusely ornamented with scroll-work, flowers and foliage, and other architectural designs similar to those seen among the ruins at Ba'albek. In the masonry over the cornice there is a small window with a double moulding, and, judging from the proportions of this elaborate fragment, the entire gateway must have been more than seventy feet high and of about the same width. Let us descend and walk through the booksellers' bazaar to Bâb el Barîd, at the end of the street. The double colonnade which formerly extended from this ancient portal to the mosk has been almost entirely destroyed, and only a few of the columns remain; some of them are built into the walls of the shops and houses along the street.

Here we are at this unpretentious entrance to the mosk, and the custodians have brought the slippers we are required to wear within the sacred edifice. On former visits I had to purchase slippers in the shoemakers' bazaar, but the keepers have become more accommodating, expecting to be liberally rewarded for their polite attentions when we leave the mosk.

This is the most important historical site in Damascus, and may have been originally an open space, the centre of which was occupied by an altar dedicated to the idol-god of the Syrians long before Abraham passed this way, "to go into the land of Canaan." Here, no doubt, was "the house of Rimmon," probably erected by one of those Ben-hadads who reigned in this city from the time of David, and which is referred to by Naaman in his interview with Elisha.[1]

[1] 2 Kings v. 17, 18.

And here Ahaz the king of Judah may have seen that altar when he came to Damascus, "the pattern" of which he sent to Urijah the priest in Jerusalem. Several hundred years later, when the Greeks and the Romans were here, a heathen temple stood upon this spot, with its altars and courts, its colonnades and triumphal arches. It must have occupied an area nearly equal in size to that of the present Haram esh Sherîf, in Jerusalem. After Christianity became the



JÂMI'A ES SEÎYED YEHYA—CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

established religion of the Byzantine Empire the temple was converted into a church and dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and the Moslems believe that his head still remains in the cave where it is said to have been placed by the monks of that church.

When Damascus fell into the hands of the Muhammedans, in the seventh century, this church was occupied by Moslems and Christians, the former taking possession of the eastern part, while the latter were allowed the use of the western portion. That

division, which indicated the comparative toleration of Muhammedanism at that period, did not continue long, and the Christians were not only expelled from their place of worship, but they were forbidden to enter the enclosure of the sacred edifice. From thenceforth the entire structure was transformed into Jâmi'a es Seîyed Yehya, or the Mosk of St. John, which name it still bears. The church was in the form of a basilica, and the space between the enclosing walls of the quadrangle upon which it stood was about five hundred feet long and three hundred and fifty feet broad. It occupied nearly one half of that space, on the south side of the quadrangle, and but few changes have been made in the interior plan since it was transformed into a mosk. The open court on the north occupies much the largest part of the quadrangle, and the ancient outbuildings in it have been removed, and fountains and minarets erected in their place.

Turning to the right, let us now enter the sacred enclosure of this present mosk and former church.

This vast edifice, with its numerous columns, its Saracenic arches, lofty roof, and many pendant frames containing scores of oil-lamps, dimly lighted, is entirely different from any public building we have yet seen in this country, and it presents a most singular and interesting appearance.

Though it cannot be called magnificent in its present condition, yet the impression produced upon the beholder by the architectural proportions and the great dimensions of the mosk is peculiar and impressive. It is about four hundred and fifty feet long, and one hundred and twenty-five feet wide, and is divided into three aisles by two rows of columns—twenty in each row—which extend the whole length of the edifice. The columns are about twenty-four feet high, and most of them have Corinthian capitals. There is another row of columns along the north side of the mosk, but they are encased in masonry, and the space between them is now taken up by many windows and doors, through which access to the mosk is gained on that side. The triple roof rests upon two tiers of arches supported by the rows of columns, and it is said to be covered with lead on the outside. In the centre of the mosk, and the transept of the ancient church, there are four massive piers, and

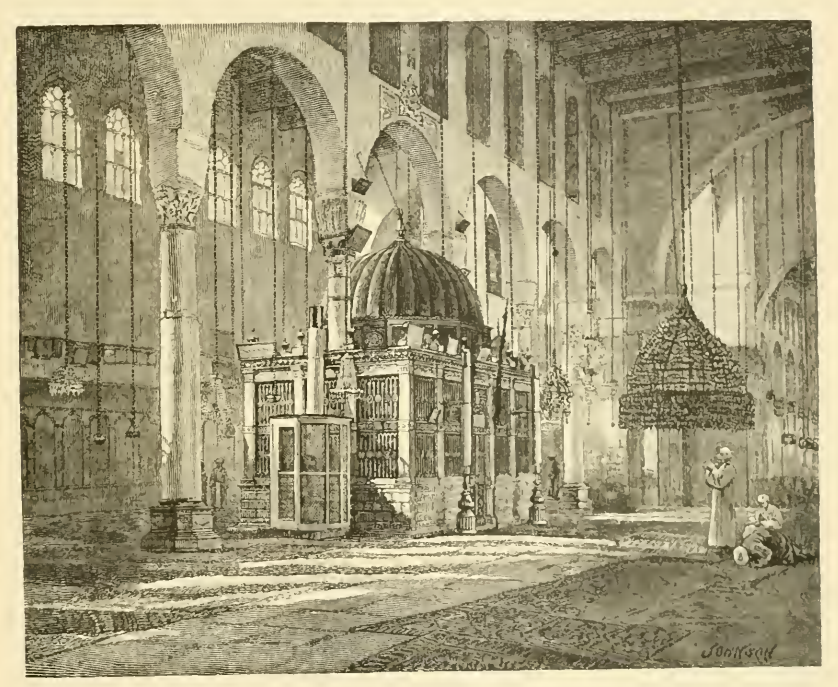
above them rises a dome about one hundred and twenty feet high, and one hundred feet in circumference. There is colored glass in the windows on the south side of the mosk, and along the walls and upon some of the columns are extracts and texts from the Korân, in the usual style of intricate caligraphy which the Arabs delight to employ and display.

Almost the entire marble floor is covered with carpets of different sizes and various patterns, upon which the "true believers" perform their daily prayers. Looking eastward along these aisles the most striking objects are those great dome-shaped frames with their hundreds of lamps, and the numerous chandeliers, suspended by long chains from the arches and lofty roof. The minbar, or pulpit, and the mihrâb, or praying-niches, in the south wall, with their slender marble columns, are quite attractive and suggestive. But the most sacred spot in the mosk is the cave above which is the shrine, or Mukâm es Seîyed Yehya. The mukâm is between the third and fourth column, to the right of the dome, and near the south wall of the eastern part of the mosk. It is enclosed by a quadrangular wall, built of five courses of polished marble, upon which stand twenty square columns, six on each side, and four at either end, counting the corner columns twice. The cornice is elaborately ornamented by extracts from the Korân, in large letters, and above it rises a ribbed dome, resting upon an octagonal structure, and surmounted by a gilded crescent. The height of the dome is about twenty-five feet, and the head of John the Baptist is believed by the Moslems to be still preserved beneath that mukâm. Like those of many Christian saints, the remains of the Baptist have been generously distributed amongst several favored mosks. His head is here, his heart is claimed in Aleppo, and one of his fingers is said to be in a mosk at Beirût.

The association of Biblical and even Christian celebrities with Muhammedan shrines in and around this most Moslem of cities appears to be one of the strange features of Damascus.

We are now in the large open court enclosed by the walls of the mosk. Including the colonnade on the east, north, and west, the court is about four hundred and fifty feet long, and one hundred and eighty feet broad. The columns in the northern colonnade are

encased in masonry, and support twenty-four horseshoe arches, upon which rests an upper tier of fifty smaller round arches. The sides of the masonry piers are ornamented with various patterns in panel-work, and elaborate designs of rich arabesque adorn the capitals, while the arches are painted on the inside in alternate black and white irregular squares, presenting a striking and checkered appearance. The upper tier of arches is composed entirely of layers of



MUKÂM ES SEÎYED YEHYA—TOMB OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

black and white limestone, and the combined effect of those varied designs and different colors in the colonnade give it an appearance eminently Oriental and attractive. More than half the number of Corinthian columns remain exposed to view in the eastern and western colonnade, and the arches in the upper tier are supported by smaller columns of the same order.

This Saracenic structure over the fountain in the middle of the court is quite imposing, with its eight columns and as many arches; and the domed pavilion above them is large and attractive.

It is called Kubbet en Naufarah, dome of the water-spout, a name suggested no doubt by the constant and refreshing sound of the plashing waters from those numerous jets. Here "the faithful" perform their ablutions before entering the mosk, and in the pavilion above this octagonal basin some of their religious ceremonies are conducted. Kubbet es Sa'ah, the dome of the hour, is in the eastern part of the court; and that curious structure near the western end is called Kubbet el Khusneh, the dome of the treasure. Under the dome of its octagonal chamber—built upon those fine marble columns, whose Corinthian capitals are almost perfect—the sacred books and records of the mosk are deposited, but no visitor is allowed to inspect such precious "treasure."

Several years ago our party of ladies and gentlemen spent an entire forenoon in the mosk and around this court. We were accompanied by the dragoman of the British Consulate, and at his request our photographer was allowed to take pictures of some of the interesting objects within this great court, and views of the colonnades and the minarets of the mosk. The entire party ascended this central minaret, called Mâdinet el 'Arûs, the minaret of the bride—winding up this same spiral stairway of one hundred and sixty steps which we are now climbing—to the gallery from where the muezzin proclaims "the call to prayers." The mosk of St. John has three minarets. The one we are on is the oldest. It is built up square, and has four galleries. Mâdinet el Ghurbîyeh, the western minaret, on the south-west side of the court, is the most beautiful. It is octagonal, built in receding sections, like a telescope, and has three galleries. The loftiest minaret of them all is Mâdinet 'Îsa, minaret of Jesus, so called from a Moslem tradition that on the morning of the judgment-day Jesus will descend from heaven upon it and sit in judgment on all the nations of the earth. It is built upon a square tower, and is octagonal in shape, tapering to a point, and surmounted, like the other two, by a crescent. There are two covered "galleries" in the tower and two open ones on the "spire" of the minaret.

The view from this minaret over this most Oriental of cities is exceedingly characteristic and interesting. We look down upon a motley scene of flat, drab-colored roofs, dark, narrow streets, square,



ORNAMENTED PIERS AND ARCHES IN THE COURT OF THE GREAT MOSK.

whitewashed walls, innumerable domes, lofty minarets, and tall, tapering cypress-trees, varied here and there by the green shrubs and large fruit-trees in the courts of some of the principal houses.

A panorama taken from the gallery of this Mâdinet el 'Arûs

would include nearly every important house, public building, mosk, and church in the city, and a large number of the villages on the plain. The new Greek Catholic Church in the extreme south-eastern part of the city is seen to advantage from here, and the great castle west of us rears its lofty quadrangular walls high above all its surroundings. The outlook from our stand-point extends far beyond the city and its suburbs, to Jebel Kasyûn, above es Sâlihîyeh, on the north; to Mount Hermon, on the west; to the distant region of the Haurân, on the south; and eastward to the green marshes of the lakes — a vast and endlessly diversified prospect of mountains and valleys, waving forests of fruit-trees, fertile plains, and stern, hopeless deserts.

We will now descend from this minaret, having "made the tour" of the mosk of St. John, which, as we have already remarked, probably occupies the site of "the house of Rimmon," in which Ben-hadad worshipped, leaning upon the hand of Naaman.[1]

Was Rimmon one of the many names given to Baal?

As the name of the ancient Syrian god it is mentioned only once in the Bible, and its signification and derivation are doubtful. It may have had reference to the pomegranate, still abundant in the gardens of Damascus; or have been an abbreviated form of Hadadrimmon, the combined names of the Syrian deities. Some suppose that it was derived from Aram, the general name for Syria, and the region of which Damascus was the capital. It is probable, therefore, that "the house of Rimmon," in this city, was one of the many temples dedicated to the worship of Baal, the supreme god of the Aramæan tribes.

The most interesting monuments in the vicinity of this mosk are the mausoleum of Salâh ed Dîn, the famous Saladin of Crusading times, and the tomb of Melek ed Dhâher Bibars, the Mameluke Sultan of Egypt. These custodians appear to be satisfied with their bakhshîsh, so we can leave the mosk through the same gate by which we entered it and go back to the hotel.

September 15th. Evening.

Returning from the mosk this noon we passed a public bath with a curtain drawn across the entrance, indicating, as you said,

[1] 2 Kings v. 18.

that it would be occupied for the rest of the day by the women. Are they not allowed to use the bath at night?

Muhammed is credited with the ungallant assertion that when a woman enters a bath the devil goes in with her; and he forbade women to go there except in rare cases of emergency and for sanitary purposes. Moslem women, however, have entirely disregarded his injunction, and those forbidden places are occasionally engaged for special nights by the families of the wealthy. The ordinary custom is to reserve the bath for the exclusive use of men in the forenoon, and women in the afternoon. Brides are taken to the bath by their relatives and friends a short time before the wedding; and such parties often spend several hours there, drinking lemonade, sipping coffee, smoking the nargîleh, and partaking of sweetmeats and other refreshments. Singing women are hired to add to the entertainment on those occasions, and the merry-making is often noisy enough to be heard out on the street.

Is it not strange that private and public baths similar to those now in use in this country are not mentioned in the Bible?

The Hebrews appear never to have built any in their houses nor in their cities, though ablutions of various kinds were common enough, and even enjoined, as part of the necessary ceremonial observances on numerous occasions. For the performance of some of those ablutions provision was made in the Tabernacle, and also in the Temple of Solomon. Subsequently, when synagogues came into use, a small tank or pool was provided for the same purpose. It is possible that the "pools" in and around Jerusalem were constructed for general bathing, and the Pool of Bethesda was evidently resorted to by the infirm and diseased for its healing virtues. Still, there is no evidence that baths, artificially heated and supplied with hot and cold water, like those now so common in nearly every part of the world, were ever erected in Palestine until about the time of Herod the Great. He and his successors had become accustomed to them during their visits to Rome, and they built baths in many of the cities of this country, as part of a general plan to break down the stern exclusiveness and isolation of the Jews, and induce them to associate with Greeks and Romans, and conform as far as possible to their manners and customs. Chris-

tians throughout the Roman Empire resorted to the baths as early as the first century, and they are now patronized by all classes, especially of the Moslem community. Muhammed disliked baths; and as they are supposed to be the favorite resort of evil spirits, prayer is not performed in them, but an ejaculation is uttered on entering to be protected from the machinations of the jân.

While we were passing through the crowded bazaars this afternoon, on our way to visit some of the fine houses of this city, I was very much interested and amused by the number and variety of the street calls or cries. I have been startled in Beirût by shrill warnings to look behind or before me to avoid being run over by loaded animals, but here in Damascus one's ears are assailed by many additional calls: "Ya Khawâjah!" "Ya Kŭnsul!" "Ya Effendi!" "Ya Sheikh!" "Ya sit!" "Ya wâlled!" "Ya bint!" "Yemmînak!" "Shemâlak!" "Râsak!" "Rîglak!"—all warnings to beware, uttered now in front, now behind, now on this side, now on that, until one knows not which way to turn for safety. Two lads, carrying between them a large tray loaded with bread, cried out, "Ya Karîm! ya Karîm!" That is not the name for bread.

No, it is one of the attributes of God, and signifies the bountiful or generous; and since bread is the staff of life, the name implies that it is the gift of the Bountiful One.

Another cry was made by a man carrying on his back a large leathern "bottle," and jingling in his hand several deep and bright copper saucers, to attract attention. I could hear nothing but "Ishrub ya 'atshân! ishrub ya 'atshân!" which meant, you said, "Drink, O thirsty!" That sounded like the Biblical invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters."[1]

Yes; but, according to Isaiah, they were to "buy without money and without price." That man's invitation, however, is very different. By the sale of his sherbet he makes his living, and he who has no money will get no drink; and if he should thus publicly offer to sell wine with or "without price," he would be torn to pieces by a fanatical Moslem mob.

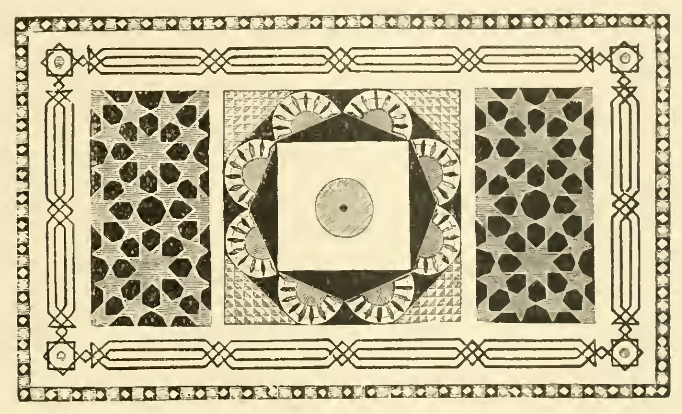
I liked the sound of his invitation, nevertheless.

And I will only add that it is a most significant and encourag-

[1] Isa. lv. 1.

ing fact that the colporteur may be seen in those bazaars pursuing his humble vocation, and offering the true "bread" and the water of "everlasting life" to the perishing multitudes in this intensely Moslem city. And the best wish we can express in behalf of the Damascenes is that they may be brought to accept it, through Him whose kingdom, according to the inscription over the entrance to their mosk, "is an everlasting kingdom," and whose "dominion endureth throughout all generations."

The house of our obliging vice-consul, and those of his friends and acquaintances which he took us to see this afternoon, are all, apparently, constructed upon the same general plan.



SPECIMENS OF TESSELLATED PAVEMENT.

The exterior wall is always of rough mud, of a plain drab color, and without windows, or with very small ones. The entrance from the street is through a most unpretending door, opening into a dark and narrow hall, with a projection or screen at the farther end, which shuts off the view into the main court. That court has no roof, and is nearly square, and in some of the larger houses is more than one hundred and fifty feet long. The walls of the court are constructed of red and white limestone or black basalt, in alternate layers, to a height of about fifteen feet, and finished with ordinary masonry. It is paved with large slabs of white marble, bordered with narrow strips of black slate, and sometimes arranged in pretty patterns and complicated figures, especially in front of the chamber

doors or around the fountains. In the middle of the court is a large tank or fountain, generally octagonal in shape, and raised two feet or more above the pavement. It is cased in marble, and the sides and panels are profusely ornamented with intricate designs in slate and limestone of various colors. The fountain is kept full of clear, sparkling water from the never-failing "river of Damascus," by one or more bronze spouts and central jets. Upon it choice flowers are arranged in large pots, and near it are fruit-trees, rose-bushes, and jessamine-vines, which impart an attractive and pleasing aspect, and their fragrance pervades the entire court and penetrates into every room in the house.

On the south side of the court, and facing the fountain, is an open lewân, with a lofty arch in front to support the roof. The pavement of the lewân is of marble, with designs in mosaic of various shapes and sizes, and of different colors. Along three sides of it are divans with marble fronts; they are generally a foot and a half high, and the quilted mattresses, together with the numerous cushions piled upon them, are covered with Damascus silk of brilliant color and rich texture. The walls of the lewân are built up for about ten feet, with alternate layers of red and white limestone or black basalt, and above that there is an elaborate display of fresco or mosaic work, in large panels and patterns. On either side of the lewân there are spacious and lofty rooms, sometimes over thirty feet high. They are entered by doors leading from the lewân, and one of them at least is furnished and decorated in a more elaborate style and design than the lewân. Frequently there is a marble fountain in the centre of the room, and the walls display a profuse ornamentation in marble, stucco, mosaic work, and fresco painting.

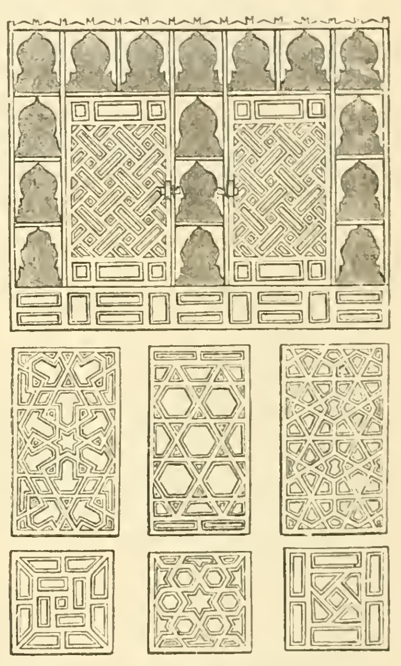
The roof is sustained by long, slender beams of poplar, polished and painted in bright colors. In some of the mansions of the wealthy those beams are covered with gilt, and farther ornamented with small pieces of mirrors and mother-of-pearl, inlaid in the wood, which add to the brilliancy of the apartment. The panels in the ceiling, in the doors, the window-frames, and shutters are similarly ornamented, and, in addition, are composed of many small pieces of polished wood of different kinds, arranged in curious figures—

COURT AND LEWÂN OF A PRIVATE HOUSE IN DAMASCUS.



over fifty in one panel. The apartments for the use of the family and those reserved for domestic purposes, kitchen, bath, and servants' rooms, are arranged around the court, on this side or that, according to the comfort and convenience of the inmates of the establishment. The Moslems have an interior and entirely distinct and separate house, sometimes more profusely ornamented and elegantly furnished, for their harêm, the entrance to which is from the court of the main dwelling.

The coffee-shops along the banks of the Barada, which we looked into this evening, were more attractive, and the motley throng in some of them was greater and far more interesting, than any we saw at Beirût.



SPECIMENS OF WOOD PANEL-WORK.

That is due in a great measure to the time, the place, and the people. Damascus is famous above all the cities of Syria for its coffee-shops and the eminently Oriental appearance of the crowds in its streets, and "night is the propitious season to visit the cafés. The glare of the sun glancing on the waters is passed away; the company is then most numerous, for it is their favorite hour, and the lamps, suspended from the slender pillars, are lighted. The throng, in the various and brilliant colors of their costumes, crowd the place, some standing moveless as the pillars beside them, some reclining against the rails, others seated in groups, or solitary, as if buried in 'lonely thoughts sublime;' while the rush of the falling waters is sweeter music than that of the tambourine and the guitar that vainly strive to be heard, and the glare of the lamps mingles strangely with the moonlight, that rests with a soft and vivid glory on

the waters and falls beneath pillar and roof on the picturesque groups within."[1]

KÂNÛN, AND MODE OF PLAYING IT.

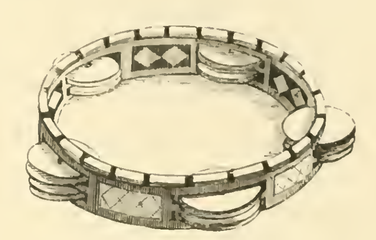
But the music was excruciating, and the singing the most outrageous concert of harsh, nasal sounds I ever heard. The same nasal twang and grating gutturals are heard in all the singing of every denomination throughout the East. The Orientals know nothing of harmony, and cannot appreciate it when heard, but they are often spellbound or wrought up to transports of ecstasy by that very music which so tortured your nerves. I have rarely known song to be more truly effective than among these stolid children of the East, especially in such places of public resort. Seated on a raised platform at one end of the coffee-shop, half a dozen performers discourse strange music from curious instruments, interspersed occasionally with wild bursts of song, which seem to electrify the smoking, coffee-sipping company. They usually have a violin, two or three kinds of flutes, a tambourine, kettle-drums, and derbekkeh. One man plays a large harp, lying



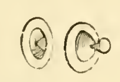
MODE OF PLAYING THE KAMANJEH.

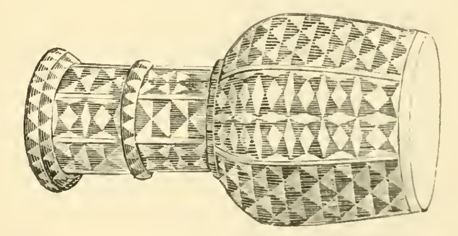
[1] Carne's Syria, The Holy Land, etc., p. 71.

upon his lap, called a kânûn, and an expert performer often makes very agreeable music with it. Another man, with a droll but merry countenance, tells stories and perpetrates jokes, to the infinite amusement of the audience. There are also players on the guitar, or kamanjeh, and one of them has a very large instrument of that kind, over whose few chords his nimble fingers sweep at times like magic.

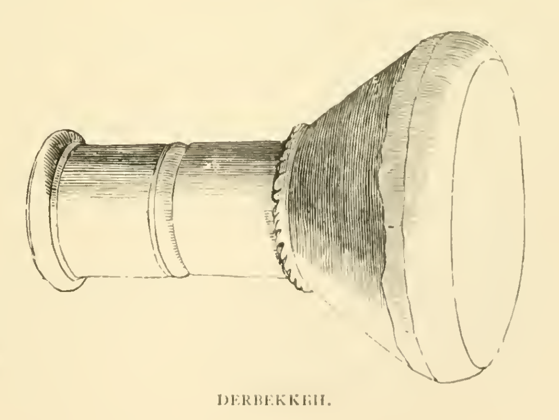

DEFF—TAMBOURINE.

The Greeks, and especially the Albanians, manage the kamanjeh with great skill. They have a small kind, which they take with them on their extemporaneous picnics, and they will sit by the hour on the shady bank of some murmuring brook and sing to its faint and monotonous notes. But the most popular of all musical instruments in this country are the derbekkeh, the deff, or tambourine, the castanets, and the nŭkkairât, or kettle-drums. At weddings, birthdays, and all other festal gatherings they will thrum the derbekkeh, and beat the deff, clink the castanets, and clap their hands in concert without weariness or intermission until long after midnight.



CASTANETS.


DERBEKKEH.

It is now impossible, I suppose, to obtain an accurate knowledge of Biblical music, and of the musical instruments used by the Hebrews.


DERBEKKEH.

That is the more surprising, since the allusions to both are almost innumerable throughout the entire Bible. The antediluvians had both music and musical instruments, the latter said to have been invented by Jubal, the son of Lamech, the first bigamist, or, rather, polygamist—an origin sufficiently illustrious. It is believed that musical instruments were not employed in the worship of God until long after their invention.

Music was used by the prophets, at least occasionally, to superinduce a condition of mind and body suitable for the reception of prophetic communications. When Samuel had anointed Saul he told him, "Thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: and the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them." And so he did, to the amazement of the people. "Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets."[1] Elisha says, "But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him" and he prophesied.[2]

The power of music over both mind and body is one of the most curious and mysterious mentioned in the Bible. David with his harp could charm away "the evil spirit" from Saul. And, whether it was actually a demon permitted by God to terrify him, or a fit of demoniacal jealousy and hatred, the effect of the music was equally surprising.[3] "The harp and the viol, the tabret and the pipe," were in the feasts of the ungodly both before and after the time of David, but they were so far redeemed from those evil associations by him that they ultimately became consecrated to the worship of Jehovah.[4]

September 16th.

I propose that we ride out this morning to Sâlihîyeh, the large suburb of Damascus on the north-west, and from there along the canal to the gorge of the Barada, and then through the Merj and around the Meidân to the south-eastern corner of the city wall, and back to the hotel along "the street called Straight." We will

[1] 1 Sam. x. 5, 6, 10–12.
[2] 2 Kings iii. 15.
[3] 1 Sam. xvi. 14, 23.
[4] 1 Chron. xv. 16.

pass out of the city at Bab es Sâlihîyeh, and ride northward for a quarter of an hour along the broad, well-paved, and shaded road between Damascus and es Sâlihîyeh.

The glimpses into the gardens obtained over these mud-walls are very inviting, and one feels inclined to enter and wander about under the trees and along the little rills.

I have done that often, and, were our visit in June instead of September, you could fully appreciate Canon Tristram's account of what he saw within them. "Tall mud-walls," he says, "extended in every direction under the trees, and rich flowing streams of water from the Barada everywhere bubbled through the orchards, while all was alive with the song of birds and the hum of bees. The great apricot-trees were laden and bent down under strings of ripe, golden fruit. The lanes were strewn with apricots. Asses, mules, and camels in long strings carried heaped panniers of these 'golden apples.' Walnut, peach, plum, pomegranate, pear, olive, orange, and even apple trees, crowded the maze through which for an hour we wound, till we found our camping-ground in a garden, one tent shaded by an apricot, the other by a walnut-tree, surrounded by pomegranates in full blossom, while a rill from the Barada ran past to cool our water-bottles."[1]

Nahr et Taurah, which we have just crossed, is the largest of the many canals taken from the Barada for the purpose of irrigation. It is conducted along the plain for several miles, and passes through some of the villages east of Damascus, before it is finally lost in the marshes of the eastern lakes.

Sâlihîyeh is quite a long and narrow village, and the greater part of it appears to be above the plain and the gardens.

It has been regarded as more healthy than Damascus, and many of its wealthy citizens have built spacious residences here, in which they spend the hot months of summer. During my first visit to Damascus I was the guest of Mr. Farren, the British Consul-general, who resided in one of those villas. It was located in the midst of a large garden, a short distance to the east of our present road, and the entrance was through a low door into the front court. Beneath an arbor over-canopied with running roses and other flow-

[1] Land of Israel, p. 616, 617.

ering creepers there was a large fountain with a lively jet d'eau in full play; and on three sides of the arbor marble platforms for divans were raised about two feet above the court. A short distance from the arbor there was a pool twenty feet long, twelve feet wide, and three feet deep; and beyond that another fountain, in an octagonal basin or reservoir, cased with white marble. From there the water was conducted to a garden in a channel paved with colored tiles. In the centre of the inner court there was a fine octagonal reservoir, supplied with clear cold water by four bronze spouts with serpents' heads.

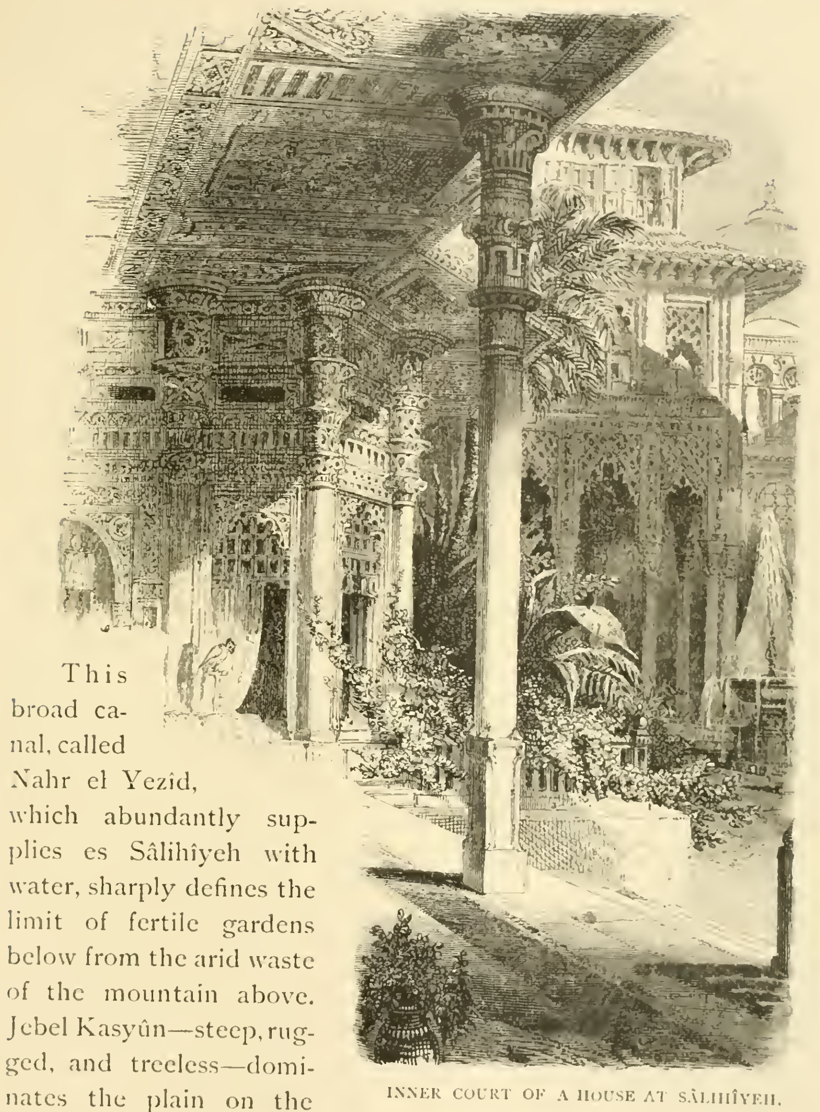
Besides those various fountains and reservoirs, basins and pools, a canal ran along the western wall of the garden; and the waters of still another flowed through the middle of it, to refresh the flowers, irrigate the fruit-trees, and water the vegetables.

Mr. Farren's villa was constructed upon the same general plan as that of the houses we have visited in Damascus, and it was adorned with the usual amount of ornamentation on walls and ceilings; but it was furnished in the European style, and combined the comforts of the West with the luxury of the East.

The abundance of water causes vegetation of all kinds to grow in these gardens with surprising exuberance. Even the myrtle expands into a stout tree, and the inhabitants of Damascus make frequent excursions to es Sâlihîyeh, during the season, to pick the myrtle-berries, which are eaten when ripe, or dried and sold in the market.

Fountains, streams, basins, reservoirs, in the city and in the gardens—seem to constitute the special charm of Damascus.

You have only to supply, in imagination, every court, and house, and mosk, and khân, and the numberless coffee-shops, with one or more, and then you will not be surprised that there are not only hundreds but thousands of them, and they constitute one of the principal attractions of the gardens themselves. It is very common to see the Damascenes sitting under the trees making kaif—eating luscious fruit, and inhaling fragrant timbek from nargîlehs placed in the rills that flow through these gardens—while the plane, the sycamore, and the willow spread a leafy canopy over their heads and shade them from the burning sun.



INNER COURT OF A HOUSE AT SÂLIHÎYEH.

This broad canal, called Nahr el Yezîd, which abundantly supplies es Sâlihîyeh with water, sharply defines the limit of fertile gardens below from the arid waste of the mountain above. Jebel Kasyûn—steep, rugged, and treeless—dominates the plain on the north, and obstructs the view in that direction. Like other places in and around Damascus, it has its fabulous sites and idle legends that connect the primeval home of the human race with the valley of the Barada.

After following the windings of the canal for half an hour the

road will lead us to the gorge of the river, where the Barada flows out on to the plain, and from whence its life-giving waters are distributed far and wide by numerous canals to all the suburbs and the gardens around the city.

The Barada is supposed to be the Abana, or Amana, one of those "rivers of Damascus" preferred by Naaman the Syrian leper to "all the waters of Israel." Is there any reason to question the correctness of the identification?[1]

None of much force. For the city itself the Barada is the only river; and, being the largest of the two, it would naturally be mentioned first by Naaman. The A'waj, or Pharpar, is several miles south of Damascus, and its waters do not reach even the suburbs. In the fifth century the Barada was called Bardines by the Greeks; and it is undoubtedly the Chrysorrhoas—golden-flowing river—of the ancients. That name was probably given to it because of the inestimable blessings it bestowed upon the inhabitants of this region, since gold is not found along its banks, nor in the mountains between which it rushes on its way to the plain.

This chasm through which the Barada issues on to the plain is quite narrow, and the lofty limestone cliffs on either side are jagged and precipitous. But the foaming river and the waving trees, the tall poplars and the exuberant vegetation, present a contrast as striking as it is picturesque; and the carriage-road from Beirût, winding down the defile, adds a novel feature to the scene.

Some distance up the chasm there is a dam across the river where the canal of et Taurah begins; and still farther up another dam, below Dummar, conducts the waters from the Barada into the canal of el Yezîd. Opposite to us, across the chasm, other canals are taken out of the river; and here begins that net-work of watercourses for which Damascus is celebrated. The main stream of the Barada, after issuing from this chasm, passes directly down through the Merj, and flows along the northern wall of the city; and although a large portion of the water has been drawn off by the five or more canals above this chasm, and a great quantity is distributed throughout the city proper, still a considerable amount is conveyed to the numerous villages, gardens, and fields north,

[1] 2 Kings v. 12.

east, and south of Damascus. Nor is the Barada exhausted in the marshes about Lake 'Ataibeh, for it flows into that lake a considerable stream of clear water. A short distance up this chasm there is a Cufic inscription on the face of the cliff above the carriage-road. It records the deeds of one of the Khalifs of Damascus; and though the letters are large and well-cut, they are so complicated that the inscription is difficult to decipher. My reason for mentioning it is because Damascus, though one of the oldest cities in the world, has almost no inscriptions of any age or importance.

We will now turn back and ride along the carriage-road towards the city, with the Barada below us on the right, and this wilderness of verdure on our left extending northward for many a mile.

These high mud-walls that border the gardens and narrow lanes effectually shut off the view of those on foot, and they are certainly anything but attractive to those on horseback.

They are constructed more for service than for ornament, and in this climate they last several years. The walls are generally over six feet high, and are built of compact masses of earth, like great sun-dried bricks. A wooden frame, three feet or more square and about two feet wide, is placed on the spot which the "brick" is to occupy; it is then filled with earth and mud and pressed down firmly. When sufficiently hard and dry the frame is removed, and another "brick" is constructed in the same manner, and so on until the entire mud-wall is finished.

What a beautiful expanse of greensward that is on the right bank of the river! We have seen nothing like it near any city or village in this country.

It is called el Merj, and it is the favorite resort of the Damascenes; nor is there another city in Syria that can boast of such a verdant "meadow," as its name implies. It is frequented by men, women, and children, who sit lazily on the river-bank sipping coffee, smoking water-pipes, or eating sweetmeats and fruits, while they watch the passers-by, or admire the horsemen from the city exercising their Arabian steeds. Here the Damascenes come forth to meet their returning friends and relatives; and from here they speed the departing and welcome their coming guests. Here, also, the caravans and pilgrims encamp previous to their departure for

Mecca; and when the Haj is about to leave Damascus this beautiful Merj presents an extraordinary and animated spectacle, and one eminently Oriental. Instead of entering the city by the gate be-



MOSK OF SULTÂN SELIM IN THE TEKÎYEH.

fore us we will cross the river and continue our ride southward and eastward on the outside of the city walls. We will pass along the extensive suburb of el Meidân, and thus complete the circuit of the city as far as the eastern gate.

That large edifice on our right, at the end of the Merj, with its numerous domes and tall minarets, is called et Tekîyeh. It was built by Sultân Selim I., in the sixteenth century, and "is a large quadrangular enclosure, divided into two courts. Around the wall of the [northern] court runs a row of cells, with a portico or gallery of columns in front. Over each cell is a small dome, and another over the portico in front of it, forming thus two rows of small domes around the court." The southern court is similar, except that it contains "a large and fine mosk, with its dome and two minarets. There poor pilgrims are lodged and fed, especially those going to or returning from Mecca with the Haj."[1] The mosk, with its double row of marble columns in front, its large dome, and tall, slender minarets, is one of the finest in Damascus, but the whole structure is fast falling into a dilapidated condition.

We have been riding for some time through this Moslem burying-ground, but I have seen nothing impressive about it—only a confused number of graves huddled together without order, and no conspicuous monument anywhere to relieve "the dreary shades" of this great city of the dead!

Yet there are some fine marble tombs, and beneath many ordinary graves there are vaults capable of holding several bodies. Most of the marble head-stones are surmounted by a neatly-wrought turban, and below it is a long Arabic inscription recording the virtues of the true believer who has "entered upon the mercy of God" and experienced peace. In the great cemetery south of the city "rest in peace," it is said, three of Muhammed's wives, and Fâtimeh, the child of his favorite daughter, the wife of 'Ali. To-day this silent city of the dead — this wilderness of tombs—is almost deserted, but on certain occasions it is crowded with women and children, who visit those whited sepulchres of their relatives to place upon them fresh branches of the myrtle and the palm. They are frequently accompanied by poor sheikhs from the mosks, who recite portions of the Korân, and short prayers in behalf both of the living and the dead.

At funerals, and over the graves in which relatives and friends have been recently buried, manifestations of grief are often bois-

[1] Rob. Res., vol. iii. p. 459.

terous and extravagant; but many of the mourners are hired for the occasion, and weep, lament, beat their breasts, and tear their hair, according to custom and contract. But from all that we must not infer that there is no genuine mourning amongst all



WOMEN WEEPING AT THE GRAVE.

sects and classes in this country. Amidst all the parade of fictitious grief there are burning tears and aching hearts, and heads bowed in silent agony and hopeless despair. Many a Fâtimeh or a Mary goes "to the grave to weep there," and loving friends follow them thither, to comfort them with their real sympathy.[1]

[1] John xi. 31.

The custom of hiring mourners is very ancient. Jeremiah says, "Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for cunning women, that they may come: and let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters."[1] Every particular there alluded to is observed on funeral occasions at the present day. There are in every city and community "cunning women," and these are always sent for. When a company of sympathizers comes in those women "make haste" to "take up a wailing," that the newly come may the more readily unite their tears with the mourners. They know the domestic history of every person, and immediately "take up" an impromptu lamentation, in which they introduce the names of relatives who have recently died, touching some tender chord in every heart; and thus all weep for their own dead, and the "mourning," which might otherwise be impossible, comes naturally and sincerely.

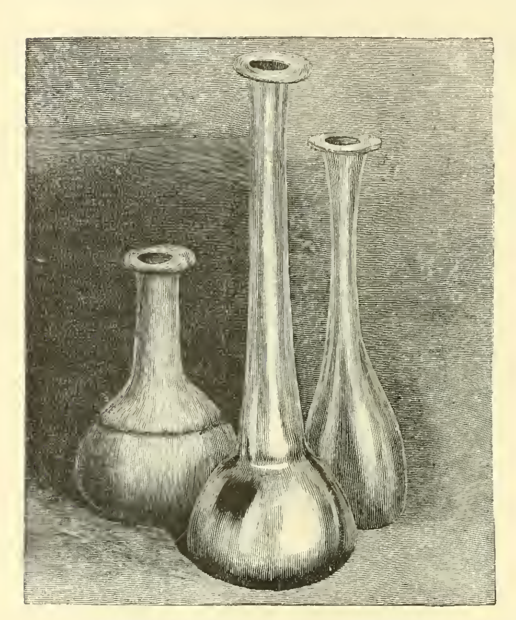
The references to lamentation and mourning are very numerous in the Bible, and some of the ways in which the afflicted and bereaved gave expression to their grief seem to us extravagant and unbecoming; loud, boisterous weeping by men, for example, and yet that was very common in those ancient times. Esau, when robbed of his birthright, "cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and he lifted up his voice and wept."[2] Job's three friends, "when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven."[3] David often wept long and loud—for Saul and Jonathan, over Absalom, and over his own sins.[4] "I am weary with my groaning," he exclaims; "all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears."[5] "Oh that my head were waters," says Jeremiah, "and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"[6]

There appears to have been a marvellous propensity to weep and a wonderful capability to pour out floods of tears in those olden days. Even in the time of Christ we read that Jesus him-

[1] Jer. ix. 17, 18. [2] Gen. xxvii. 34, 38. [3] Job ii. 12.
[4] 2 Sam. xix. 4. [5] Psa. vi. 6. [6] Jer. ix. 1.

self wept;[1] and in another place that the woman who "stood at his feet behind him," as he "sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, began to wash his feet with tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet."[2]

So far from regarding such overflowing tears as unbecoming, the ancients treasured them up in "bottles," as evidence of their lasting sorrow, perhaps; and for a similar reason, I suppose, they deposited those lachrymatories in the sepulchres of the dead. Allusion to that extraordinary custom is thought to be found even in the Bible. David prays, "Put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?"[3] Lachrymatories are still found in ancient tombs throughout this country. They were made of thin glass, or more generally of pottery, often not even baked or glazed. They are of various sizes, with a slender vase-like body, and a long funnel-shaped neck; but nothing except dust is found in them at present. If the relatives and friends were expected to contribute their share of tears for those bottles they would certainly need "cunning women" to cause their "eyelids to gush out with waters."



LACHRYMATORIES, OR TEAR BOTTLES.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel speak of smiting the thigh in times of great distress and mourning. Is that custom observed to this day?[4]

On such occasions you will often see people sitting on the ground with their feet under them, which brings the thighs into such a position that the smiting of them is rendered perfectly

[1] John xi. 35.
[2] Luke vii. 37, 38.
[3] Psa. lvi. 8.
[4] Jer. xxxi. 19; Eze. xxi. 12.



MUHAMMEDAN FUNERAL PROCESSION.



natural. Thus seated, and swaying backwards and forwards, they lift their hands spasmodically, from time to time, and smite each thigh with considerable violence, giving expression to their grief in loud wailing and lamentation. No one can live long in this country without witnessing every exhibition of mourning mentioned in the Bible — rending the garments, tearing the hair, beating the breast, falling upon the ground, smiting the thighs, casting dust upon the head, and the like.

We have passed out of the Meidân, as that southern extension of Damascus is called, and we will continue our ride through the suburbs towards the south-eastern corner of the city wall.

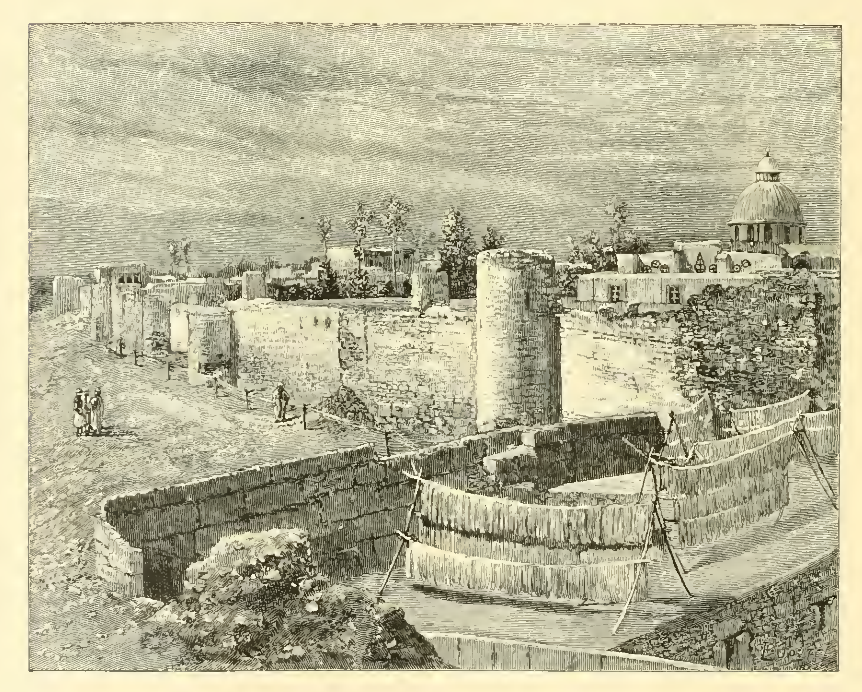
We seem to be entering a winding labyrinth of crooked lanes, with wretched houses and mounds of rubbish on either side, and dilapidated tombstones all around—in such a maze there is danger of becoming bewildered and losing the way.

That would certainly be the result if we attempted to penetrate it alone; but our guide will take us safely through. On our left is one of the many gates of Damascus, called Bâb es Saghîr, through which have passed for many centuries countless funeral processions to the numberless tombs and graves which cover this whole region far and wide. Like almost everything else purely Oriental, such processions are conducted without much regard to order and propriety. A confused medley of men and boys, in all kinds of costumes, follow the bier, which is preceded by two or more dervishes carrying the flags of their order, three or four small boys with an open copy of the Korân, and six or eight blind men chanting in a monotonous tone the profession of faith. That "eternal truth," "La îlâh illa Allah"—"There is no god but God," accompanied by that "necessary fiction," as Gibbon styles it, "Muhammed râsûl Allah"—"Muhammed is the prophet of God"—is the only funeral dirge, and they repeat it over and over until the grave is reached.

We have caught occasional glimpses of the city wall, on our left, and it appears to be almost as dilapidated and ruinous as the suburb along which it extends.

Bâb es Saghîr is probably of Roman origin, and in a few places along the wall large and well-cut stones are seen which may be of

any age; but the present wall is mere patch-work, built by Saracens, Arabs, or Turks, and barely sufficient to defend the city against incursions from the Bedawîn. We shall soon escape from this cemetery, through which we have been threading our doubtful way for half an hour, and, turning to the left, we will reach the south-east angle of the wall not far from Bâb Kisân. That gate has been walled up for many centuries, but this neighborhood is not devoid of interest. Although the wall has been rebuilt several times, monkish tradition still points to that part of it between this round tower on our left and the gate west of it as the place from



SOUTH WALL OF DAMASCUS, WHERE PAUL WAS LET DOWN.

where Saul "was let down through a window in a basket by the wall, and escaped," from the hands of the governor, as he informs us in his second letter to the Corinthians.[1] In this vicinity are the cemeteries of the various Christian denominations; and there, too,

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33.

the monks have recently located the spot where Paul was converted, "as he came near Damascus, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord."[1] During the Crusades the site of that stupendous miracle was located at Jûneh, near Kaukab, a village on the road to Jerusalem, about six miles to the south-west of Damascus; but as four places along the roads leading to the city have been pointed out at different times, it is evident that the true site is still unknown.

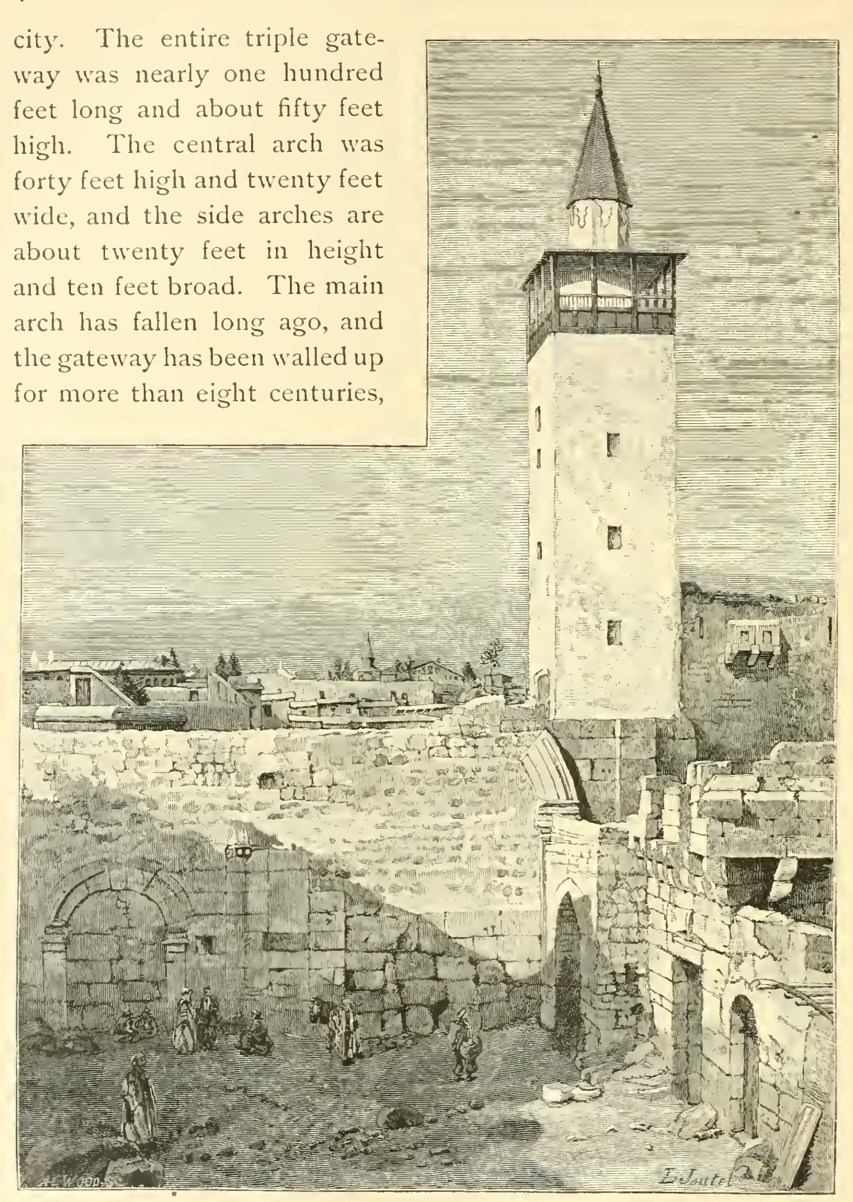
As we approach Bâb esh Shŭrky, the eastern gate, we see large mounds of rubbish, and from the top of one of them an extensive view is obtained, not only of the surrounding country, but also of a considerable part of the city. After the massacres, and conflagrations in 1860, these mounds were largely increased by the ruins of the Christian quarter, which were carried out of the town, in order to clear the encumbered streets and prepare the way for rebuilding the houses of the Christians. That work was vigorously prosecuted by the Turkish authorities when the city was visited by the international commission appointed by the six great Powers of Europe to investigate that awful tragedy. The day upon which the High Commissioners visited the ruins was quite windy, and the dust from the rubbish was blown into their faces. Lord Dufferin, the English representative, is said to have remarked upon that occasion that the Turkish authorities were attempting to throw dust in their eyes, both literally and politically.

A short distance north of this East Gate is a large, dilapidated building, now used as a leper hospital, and said to occupy the site of the house of Naaman the leper. In the same neighborhood are the wretched hovels of those afflicted with that loathsome disease; and it is a remarkable fact that leprosy has been perpetuated in this city from the time of Naaman down to the present day. Some of the most frightful ravages of that dreadful scourge of God are still to be seen upon its miserable victims in and around the leper hospital at Damascus.

Bâb esh Shŭrky deserves to be carefully examined, as it is evidently Roman, and the walls and arches present almost the only specimens of antiquity to be seen in this mud-built Muhammedan

[1] Acts ix. 1–9.

city. The entire triple gateway was nearly one hundred feet long and about fifty feet high. The central arch was forty feet high and twenty feet wide, and the side arches are about twenty feet in height and ten feet broad. The main arch has fallen long ago, and the gateway has been walled up for more than eight centuries,



BÂB ESH SHŬRKY—THE EAST GATE.

together with the smaller portal on its south side. The entrance to the city is now through the small portal on the north side, and

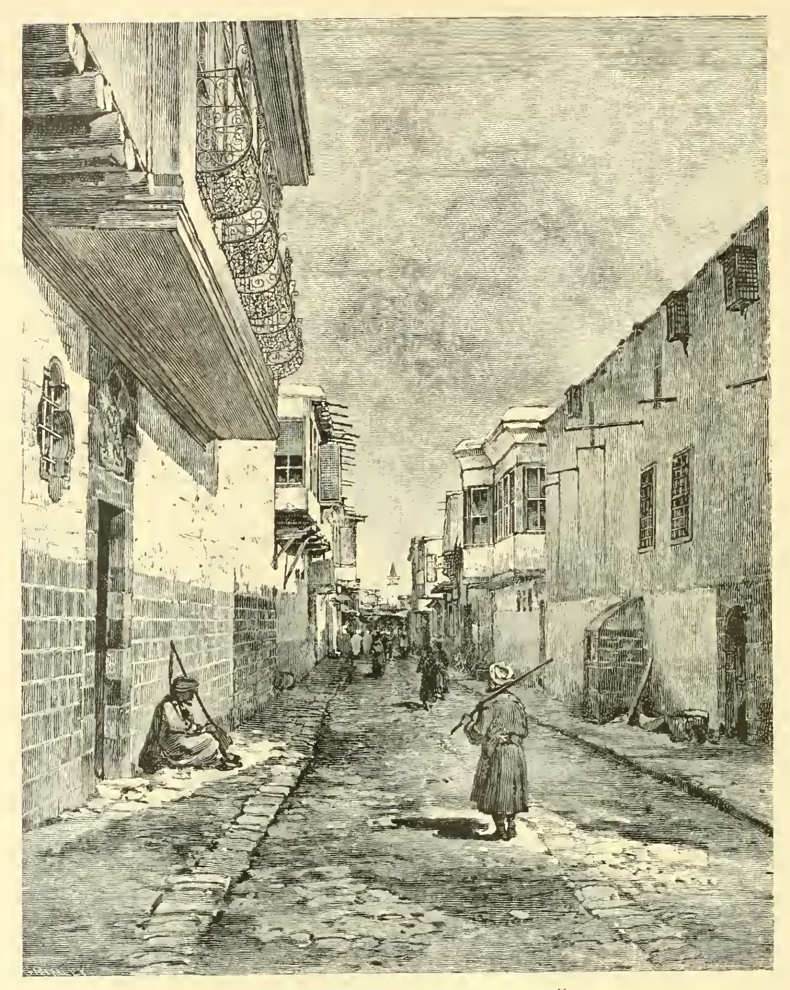
built upon the northern buttress of the central arch is a square minaret, from the top of which a fine view of the city and its surroundings is obtained. East of the gateway are the remains of a Saracenic tower. Damascus now has about a dozen gates, but formerly it had more than three times that number, most of which are in ruins, or have been closed for several centuries. Many of the principal streets leading to the various quarters of the city also have gates, which are closed after dark; but a bakhshîsh to the gatekeeper will admit the belated wayfarer at any reasonable hour of the night.

We will now pass through Bâb esh Shŭrky and follow the street which extends westward from it quite across the city. It is called the Sultâneh, or highway, and is the modern representative of "the street which is called Straight," where stood the house of Judas when Paul visited Damascus.

The street, though not exactly "straight," is wide for an Eastern city; but a moment's inspection of the dilapidated houses along it will convince any one that none of them could by any possibility have been in existence at that time.

If it was then adorned throughout its whole length by a double colonnade it must have been a fine avenue. Dr. Robinson mentions the report about such a colonnade, "but could hear of no one who had actually seen the columns."[1] Since then Dr. Porter has "traced the remains of the colonnades at various places over nearly one third of its length." He says that the street "was divided by Corinthian colonnades into three avenues, of which the central was for foot passengers and the others for chariots." Thus "a noble street extended from the east to the west gate, intersecting the city. Its length is about a mile, and its breadth exceeded one hundred feet."[2] We are now in the Christian quarter, most of which lies along the northern side of the street, but here on our left is the Armenian convent. The Syrian church and convent and the Greek Catholic church are also on the south side of the street, but to reach them we would have to penetrate this quarter for some distance through narrow and crooked lanes. All those ecclesiastical edifices have been rebuilt since the massacres and conflagrations of 1860. The house of that "certain disciple named Ananias," by

[1] Rob. Res., vol. iii. p. 455. [2] Five Years in Damascus, p. 18.



"THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT."

whom Paul was miraculously restored to sight, is but a short distance up that narrow street to the right. There is a cave in the house which the Latin priests have converted into a chapel, and there, according to their traditions, the angel of the Lord appeared to Ananias and directed him to "go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth."[1]

[1] Acts ix. 10, 11.

There must have been quite a colony of Jews here at the time when Saul came with his cruel commission from the high priest.

The Jews of Damascus claim to be the descendants of its ancient Hebrew inhabitants, and they have perpetuated their language and religion, their costume, and their manners and customs, from the time of David down to the present day. As in past ages, and in nearly every country, the Jews had special localities allotted to them, so here they have their own distinct quarter. It occupies the south-eastern part of the city, and is separated from the Christian quarter by this street which, as in the time of Paul so now, is still called "Straight." If religious institutions and forms of worship improve, like wine, from mere age, then the ten or more Jewish synagogues in this city, and the services observed within them, would be without a rival for strength of body and characteristic virtue. At any rate, the transmission unchanged of a form of faith and mode of worship—resembling in many respects those of the primitive Christians—through countless generations of mighty revolutions in the affairs of men and nations, is a marvellous fact, to be explained only by reference to Providential agency. It forms one of the thousand links in the chain which anchors our faith fast to the Bible, as the Word of God.

Paul must have often taken a prominent part in the synagogue worship in this city, when "he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ."[1]

We may without hesitation carry the institution of the synagogue and its worship here in Damascus many centuries farther back than the time of Paul—to the Babylonian Captivity at least, and even beyond that more than three hundred years, to the day when Ahab "made streets" in this city. It is improbable that a colony of Jews would reside here without places of worship, and they were, perhaps, much like the synagogues of the present day.

This street on our right leads to the Orthodox Greek church, the residence of the Patriarch, and the flourishing schools adjoining it. The church is dedicated to the Virgin, and has been rebuilt since the massacres of 1860. "It was the scene of one of the most

[1] Acts ix. 20, 22.

fearful acts in the tragedy of 1860," says Dr. Porter. "Hundreds of men, women, and children had taken refuge in it. It was attacked by the mob, set on fire, and those who attempted to escape were hurled back into the flames."[1]

Has it been possible to ascertain how many Christians were the innocent victims of Turkish treachery and Muhammedan fanaticism during the three days of those atrocious massacres and dreadful conflagrations?

The most reliable estimates place the number of adult males killed outright at over two thousand five hundred. But even that apparently large number of murdered men fails to convey to the minds of those who have never resided in this country an adequate idea of the horrors and terrible results of that massacre of the Christians by Turkish troops and fanatical Muhammedans here in Damascus, on the 9th, 10th, and 11th of July, 1860. The whole number of Christians massacred in 1860, from Lebanon on the north to Hermon on the south, exceeded six thousand.

We have now reached the bazaars and the business portion of the city, which occupy the greater part of the Moslem quarter, to the north and north-west. European manufactures have nearly paralyzed every branch of Oriental art which flourished in this city in other days. The "Damascus blade," formerly so celebrated, and the rich silk fabric called "damask," have disappeared entirely from the bazaars, and have been replaced by cheap and coarse imitations from the forges and looms of Europe. The trade and traffic of this city is now chiefly with the pilgrims to and from Mecca and the surrounding tribes of Bedawîn.

A walk through the crowded bazaars gives the impression that Damascus is a very populous city.

Four-fifths of the inhabitants, or nearly one hundred thousand, are Muhammedans. There are also about four thousand Metâwileh, and five hundred Druses, who, however, conform to the faith of Islâm while residing in the city. The Christians of various sects amount to more than fifteen thousand—principally Greeks and Greek Catholics—including the small communities of Latins, Maronites, Armenians, Syrians, and Protestants. The Jews may

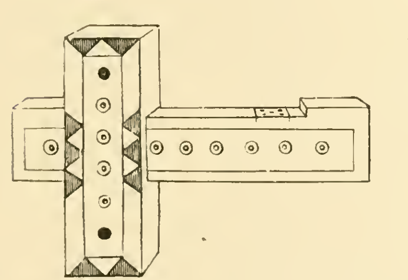
[1] Five Years in Damascus, p. 20, 21.

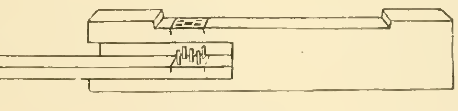
number five thousand, and the entire population cannot be much less than one hundred and twenty-five thousand.

We have passed the narrow lane on the left, on which the traditional house of Judas stands, where Ananias restored Paul to sight and baptized him.[1] It is now in the possession of the Muhammedans, and contains the tomb, not of Judas, but that of Ananias, which is much respected by them.

This Moslem has unconsciously exhibited an illustration of Isaiah xxii. 22: "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open." The key with which he locked the door of his magazine was large enough, certainly, and it might well be laid on his shoulder.

I have seen keys more than twice the size of that one, carried upon the shoulder of merchants, shopkeepers, and others. The material "house of David" was the stronghold of Zion, and such castles have great wooden locks, with keys in proportion. I once spent a summer in an old castle whose outer gate had such a lock, and the key was almost a foot and a half in length, and quite a load to carry. Locks of that kind are no doubt very ancient. Their construction, though truly simple, is such that a false key can scarcely be made to fit them, and the difficulty is increased in proportion to the number and position of the movable metal drops and the holes into which they are required to fall.





LOCK AND KEY.

These locks are often placed on the inside of the gates of gardens and outer courts, and even on the doors of inner rooms in some places. To enable the owner to unlock them a hole is cut

[1] Acts ix. 17, 18.

in the door, through which he thrusts his arm and inserts the key. The garden gates about Damascus are thus secured, and such must have been the custom at Jerusalem in the days of Solomon. In Song v. 4 he makes the bride say, "My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door;" that is, she saw him thrust in his hand to unlock the door, that he might enter.

The strong scent of musk, the aromatic odor of spices and drugs, and the lavish display of boxes and bottles, of many colors and sizes, remind us that we are now in Sûk el 'Attârîn, as this part of the "Straight Street" is called. As in all Oriental cities, so pre-eminently here, in Damascus, the principal streets derive their names from the special branch of trade to which they have been devoted from time out of mind. It may be well to mention in passing, and by way of explanation, that a dealer in essences is a 'attâr, and that here can be purchased rose-petals for confections, rose-water to flavor refreshing beverages, and curiously-shaped vials of attar or otto of roses, so well-known abroad, and so highly prized as a perfume in Oriental countries. Riding in these covered bazaars and through this motley crowd is both unpleasant and quite unsafe; besides, it is not customary here in Damascus, so we will send the horses forward, and walk to the hotel by the shortest route.

September 15th. Evening.

No one who takes such a ride through the exuberant suburbs of Damascus as we did to-day will be at a loss to account for its existence from early times, or for its long life and enduring prosperity; and it is not surprising that Dr. Beke should have tried to prove that Haran, the place to which Abraham migrated from Ur of the Chaldees, and from which he went forth into the land of Canaan, was situated in the vicinity of this city.

Dr. Beke was thoroughly convinced that Hârrân el 'Awamîd, a village south-east of Damascus, and near the South Lake, marks the true site of the Biblical Haran, and he made a tour with his wife through that region to establish the identification, which nearly cost him his life.

Have you ever been to that Hârrân?

I visited it in company with Rev. J. Crawford, the well-known

missionary of this city, and will give you an account of our ride thither. That neighborhood is infested by lawless Druses and roving Bedawîn, and we were obliged to take a guard of Turkish soldiers or horsemen for our protection. Issuing from Bâb esh Shŭrky, we came in an hour to Melîha, and in half an hour more to Zebdîn. The gardens of Damascus extend for several miles in that direction, and the road was shaded nearly all the way by fruit-trees and high and wide-spreading walnuts. During the next hour's ride we crossed many watercourses lined with tall silvery poplars, and finally forded a large stream called Nahr Hârûsh.

Beyond that the country was destitute of trees, and little cultivated. The plain, for several miles before reaching Hârrân, was covered with a short grass, presenting the appearance of a stiff sward, with here and there a thin sprinkling of low bushes. Large tracts were also overrun with the licorice-plant, called by the Arabs rub es sûs. Numerous villages, with their gardens of fruit-trees and groves of poplars, dotted the plain in all directions; and about an hour's distance on the left flowed the Barada, meandering eastwards towards the lake. It took us just four hours to reach Hârrân, which lies on the perfectly level plain that extends to the marshes of Bahret el Kiblîyeh, into which the Barada enters, and through which it finds its way to the lake.

From the roof of the mosk in the western part of the village we could see the green fringe of tall reeds that borders, and in some places nearly covers, the surface of the lake; but the lake itself was not visible. The Bedawîn, however, assured us that there was always a considerable expanse of clear water near the mouth of the Barada, even during the dryest season of the year. The villanous-looking Arabs and Bedawîn in and around the village caused our guides great uneasiness, and they requested us not to remain there any longer than was necessary. We therefore proceeded at once to examine the three tall columns in the centre of the village, from which it derives the specific name of Hârrân el 'Awamîd, Hârrân of the Columns. They are detached from any other ancient remains, and are in some respects quite unique, and excite the surprise of the visitor.

The material of the columns is black basalt, somewhat porous.

but very hard. They are nearly twelve feet in circumference, and, including base and capital, are about forty feet high. The shafts, composed of six or seven pieces—the number differing in each—are much worn and cracked, large fragments having split off and



REMAINS OF A TEMPLE AT HÂRRÂN EL 'AWAMÎD.

fallen away. Two of the columns have Ionic capitals, but that of the third, which stands at an angle to the others, has fallen from its high position; and as the edifice to which they belonged no longer exists, one is at a loss to understand the object for which they were erected. They are probably the remains of an ancient temple, the ruins of which, consisting of hewn stones and broken

columns, are scattered about the village. Built into the wall of the mosk is a portion of a shaft with a Greek inscription; but it is so defaced, and partially concealed, that we could not decipher it. That is the last village in the direction of the lake; and, apart from the columns, there is nothing of the least interest at Hârrân, nor any indication that it ever was a place of any importance.

Does the topographical position of Hârrân correspond to the requirements of the Biblical Haran?

Exactly where Haran was is not mentioned in the Bible, and it is only in connection with the pursuit of Jacob by Laban that the identity of Hârrân el 'Awamîd with the Biblical Haran should be considered. Three days after his flight Jacob was pursued by Laban and overtaken "in Mount Gilead," after a chase of seven days. The distance between Hârrân el 'Awamîd and the place in Gilead where Jacob "pitched his tent" could not have been more than ninety miles, and it might have taken him ten days to get there; but it is almost ridiculous to suppose that it would take Laban seven days' hot pursuit to reach the same spot. Remembering that the uniform tradition of the Jews themselves is that they came from Mesopotamia, and that "the city of Nahor" was in that country, and from other reasons which it is not necessary to mention, we must conclude that the accidental resemblance in the names of the two places is too slender a basis to support the theory of their identity.

On our way back to Damascus we followed a path farther to the north, crossing and re-crossing the main stream of the Barada, and we were glad to get safely back to the city, and so were the horsemen sent for our protection by the Pasha.

XI.

DAMASCUS TO EL MUSMEIH.

Damascus the Capital City of Islâm.—The Religion Established by Muhammed.—Life and Character of the Arabian Prophet.—The Caaba.—Khadîja.—Muhammed Asserts his Prophetic Mission.—El Hegira.—The Crescent and the Star.—Conversion of the Inhabitants of Yathreb.—Jewish Colonies.—Inconsistencies in the Character of Muhammed Described by Mr. Muir.—"Weeping with them that Wept," yet taking Pleasure in cruel Assassination and Massacre.—Death of Muhammed in Medîna, and his Burial in the House of 'Ayesha.—El Haram.—"The Illiterate Prophet."—The Korân Revealed by the Angel Gabriel and Transcribed upon the Shoulder-blades of Camels and Goats.—Compilation and Revision of the Korân.—Muhammedan Reverence for the Korân.—The Death Penalty.—The Pentateuch, the Psalms, and the Gospels of Jesus.—The Patriarchs Inspired Messengers.—Jesus Mentioned with Respect in the Korân.—Muhammed the Last and Best of God's Prophets.—Moslems are Unitarians and Fatalists.—Apostasy Imperils Life.—The Attributes of God.—Spiritual Beings.—Worship of Saints.—The Resurrection of the Body.—Judgment at the Last Day.—Paradise.—Wine Prohibited.—Prayer.—Ablutions.—Friday, the Assembly.—Alms-giving.—Bread Thrown to Dogs.—Alms Forbidden to Christians and Jews.—Rigid Fast during Ramadân.—Necessary Preparations for a Tour through Bashan and Gilead.—Pilgrimage to Mecca.—El Haj.—Damascus the Starting-place of the Syrian Pilgrims.—Emîr el Haj.—Departure of the Pilgrims from Damascus.—The Mahmel.—Escort of Bedawîn Mounted on Camels.—Pilgrims on Camels, Horses, and Mules.—Return of the Haj from Mecca.—Forlorn and Woe-begone Appearance of the Pilgrims.—Bâb Allah.—"Bâb el Maut, the Gate of Death."—Burckhardt.—Pilgrims that now Pass through the Suez Canal.—Mr. Muir's Estimate of the Benefits Conferred upon the World by Islam.—The Continuation of Derb el Haj.—The Ghûtah.—Abulfeda.—One of the Four Paradises of the Earth.—Moslem Legend.—The Plain of Damascus Crowded with Villages.—Absence of Important Ruins.—The Merj.—Jebel el Aswad.—Quarries of Basalt.—The Pharpar.—El Kesweh.—El 'Awaj.—The Sabirâny.—Wady Barbar.—'Ain Menbej, an Intermitting Fountain.—Roman Road.—Jebel Mâni'a.—Villages.—Jebel esh Sheikh.—Aklîm el Bellân.—Kŭl'at Jendal.—Ascent of Hermon.—Wady el 'Ajam.—Moslem Villages.—Bedawîn and Kŭrds.—Cold Winds.—S'âs'â.—Ancient Road.—El Kuneitirah.—Paul's Journey to Damascus.—Jûneh.—Deir 'Aly.—Frogs.—Greek Inscriptions.—Leboda.—Marcion.—The Marcionites.—El Jeidûr.—Jetur.—The Hagarites.—The Half Tribe of Manas-

seh.—The Captivity.—Alexander the Great.—Seleucidæ.—Iturea.—Aristobulus.—Philip, Tetrarch of Iturea.—John the Baptist.—El Jaulân.—Golan, a City of Refuge.—Gaulanites.—Elevated Lava Plateaus.—Wuld 'Aly Bedawîn.—No Inhabited Villages.—Lava Bowlders.—Robbers.—Ruins of Old Towns and Deserted Villages.—Ez Zughbâr.—A World once on Fire.—El Merjâny.—Good Water.—Basaltic Soil.—Burckhardt.—Column of the Morning.—Small Temple.—Subterraneous Aqueduct.—Private Habitations at El Bŭrâk Described by Dr. Porter.—Stone Walls, Doors, Windows, and Roofs.—Stone Gate.—Saltpetre Manufactories.—El Liwa.—Wady Liwa.—Arabs of the Lejah.—Villages and Towns in Ruins.—Cultivation and Winter Torrents.—Um ez Zeitûn.—Druses.—Hid Treasure.—Ard el Bathanyeh.—Batanis.—M. Waddington.—Inscriptions.—The Ancient Names of Places still Preserved.—Jebel Haurân.—Ard el Bathanyeh Described by Dr. Porter.—Ibrahim Pasha.—El Hârrah.—Mr. Cyril C. Graham's Adventurous Tour in the Hârrah.—A Desert Waste.—Ancient Wells.—Deserted Places.—Rock Inscriptions.—Himyritic Writing.—Kings of the Himyri.—Dr. J. G. Wetzstein.—The Safâh.—Volcanic Soil.—Arabs of the Lejah.—Nomadic Tribes of the Desert.—The Apostle Paul.—Early Christian Churches East of the Jordan.—Origin.—"The Region of Argob."—Trachonitis.—Zenodorus.—Robbers' Caverns.—Cæsar, Herod, Philip, Agrippa.—El Lejah, an Asylum.—Dr. Porter's Description of the Lejah.

September 17th.

DAMASCUS being the capital city of Islâm in Syria, it must be the best place to study the religion of "the true believers." We move about among Moslems every day, and the spirit of their religion pervades the very air we breathe, yet I have only a general and vague idea of its origin and religious obligations.

Islâm—"submission to the will of God"—is the religion established by Muhammed, and it is the dominant faith of about one hundred and fifty millions of the human race; and the mosk, the dome, and the minaret are seen everywhere throughout the Moslem world, from the banks of the Ganges to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. As Muhammed is himself the incarnation of the religion which commonly bears his name, it is impossible to speak of Islâm, or even think about it, apart from the life and character of the Arabian Prophet, "the apostle of God." I will therefore give you a brief account of his career, and of the faith of Islâm.

Muhammed was born about the year 571, at Mecca, an ancient city of Arabia, in the province of Hedjaz, and nearly sixty miles inland from Jiddah, its sea-port on the eastern shore of the Red Sea. His parents belonged to the tribe of Kureish and the family of Hâshem, the most illustrious and influential in the city; the

hereditary custodians of the Caaba, with its black stone and sacred well, Zemzem. The Caaba was said to have contained statues of all the gods worshipped by the Arabs before the time of Muhammed, but he broke all the idols, and it is now the most venerated shrine in the Moslem world. Having lost his parents in early life, the future prophet was adopted by his uncle, and accompanied him on a trading expedition to Syria. Subsequently, at the age of twenty-five, he conducted a similar expedition in the interest of Khadîja, a rich widow of his native city, who ultimately rewarded him with her hand and fortune.

During his visit to Syria, then a part of the Byzantine empire, he was brought into contact with Christianity as represented by the Greek Church of that day, which, no doubt, greatly influenced the general character of some of his peculiar visions and revelations recorded in the Korân. It was not until his fortieth year that Muhammed began to assert his prophetic mission, and, after enduring great opposition from his fellow-townsmen for ten years, he was obliged to flee for his life to Medîna, then called Yathreb. That flight of the prophet, known as el Hegira, occurred on the 16th of July, A.D. 622, and has served to fix the date of the Muhammedan lunar year from that day to this — a period of more than twelve centuries. And "from the fact that on that night the moon was gibbous, a crescent with a star has been adopted by the Muhammedans as an ensign of the royal arms, and on their banners, in commemoration of what they consider as the most distinguished period in the life of the prophet."[1]

The conversion of the inhabitants of Yathreb enabled Muhammed rapidly to establish his authority as Prince and Prophet over the whole of Arabia. In Yathreb there were two colonies of Jews to whom the prophet must have been indebted for many of the moral and religious precepts incorporated into the Korân. Before the Hegira, and until the time when he established himself in Yathreb as a powerful and warlike prince, Muhammed's moral and religious record was fair and honorable in the main, but from that date and onward every evil element in the character of the prophet developed with surprising rapidity.

[1] Rev. J. Wortabet's Researches into the Religions of Syria, p. 164.

"The truth is," says Mr. William Muir, "that the strangest inconsistencies blended together—according to the wont of human nature—throughout the life of the prophet. The student of the history will trace for himself how the pure and lofty aspirations of Mahomet were first tinged, and then gradually debased, by a half-unconscious self-deception; and how in this process truth merged into falsehood, sincerity into guile—these opposite principles often co-existing even as active agencies in his conduct. The reader will observe that, simultaneously with the anxious desire to extinguish idolatry and to promote religion and virtue in the world, there was nurtured by the prophet in his own heart a licentious self-indulgence; till in the end, assuming to be the favorite of Heaven, he justified himself by 'revelations' from God in the most flagrant breaches of morality. He will remark that while Mahomet cherished a kind and tender disposition, 'weeping with them that wept,' and binding to his person the hearts of his followers by the ready and self-denying offices of love and friendship, he could yet take pleasure in cruel and perfidious assassination, could gloat over the massacre of an entire tribe, and savagely consign the innocent babe to the fires of hell. Inconsistencies such as these continually present themselves from the period of Mahomet's arrival at Medîna; and it is by the study of these inconsistencies that his character must be rightly comprehended."[1]

Muhammed died June 8th, A.D. 632, in the sixty-third year of his age, at Yathreb, then called Medînat en Neby, the city of the prophet; and he was buried on the spot where he died, in the house of 'Ayesha, over which now rises the green dome of el Haram, the sacred mosk of Medîna. Passing from this mere glance at the man to the religion which he established, the attention is naturally directed to the Korân, of which he was the original author. Muhammed exulted in the title of the Illiterate Prophet, and it is presumed that he could neither read nor write. The angel Gabriel revealed to him, as occasion required, the chapters, verses, and fragments of the Korân, and they were written by some of his friends upon palm-leaves, white stones, pieces of leather, and the shoulder-blades of camels and goats. After the death of Muhammed those literary

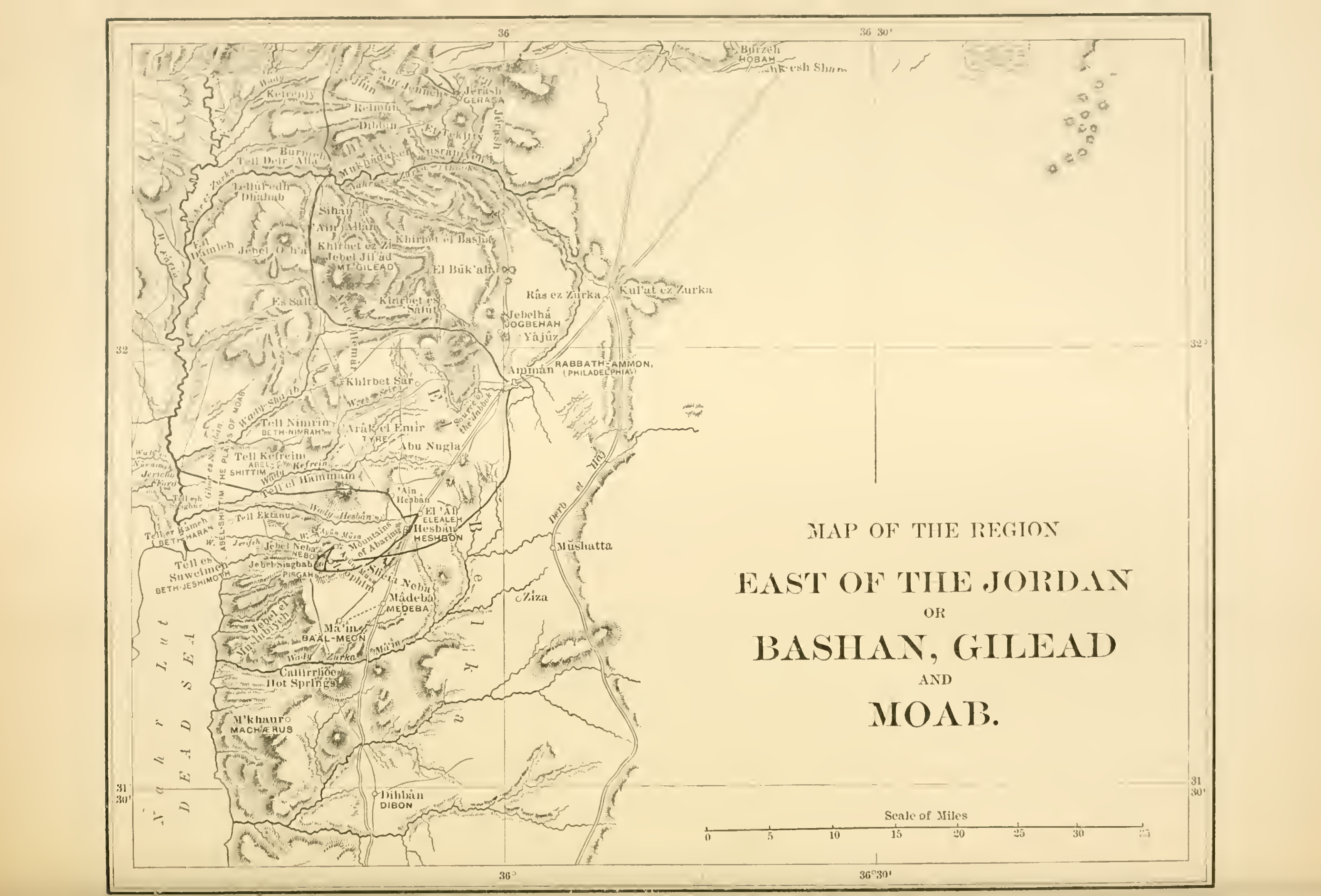
[1] Life of Mahomet, vol. iv. pp. 322, 323.

fragments were collected and compiled during the caliphate of Abu Bekr, and subsequently revised in that of Othmân. The result was the Korân, which the entire Moslem world has accepted as containing the inspired "revelations" of the Arabian prophet.

El Korân is regarded by the Muhammedans with a degree of profound reverence accorded to no other book in the world, for it is believed to be absolutely divine, uncreated, incorruptible, and eternal. Its teachings prescribe their religious faith, guide their daily life, and permeate and control their whole intellectual being and moral character, and to deny its divine authority the penalty is death. Besides the Korân, Muhammed accepted certain other scriptures as being inspired by God, including the Pentateuch, the Psalms of David, and the Gospels of Jesus, but all of them are supposed to have been corrupted, and their authority was abrogated by his own "revelations." Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus were inspired messengers and apostles. Jesus is mentioned with respect in the Korân, but he is not the Son of God, and the Jews "did not crucify him, but one like him was given up unto them."[1] Muhammed was the last and the best of God's prophets, and has abrogated the authority of all his predecessors.

A Moslem, or Muslim, is one who has submitted to the will of God, and all Moslems, as you know, are unitarians and fatalists. Any one who makes the brief declaration that "there is no god but God, and Muhammed is the Apostle of God," is a Moslem, nor can he apostatize except at the peril of his life. Muhammedans believe in the essential attributes of God: that he is infinite, unchangeable, and eternal, the Lord of all, and the creator of the universe, and that all events, both good and evil, are foreordained by him and inevitable. The practical and living faith of a community is generally very different from its fundamental creed and religious dogmas, and so it is and always has been amongst the Moslems. Though they acknowledge "no god but God," yet there are innumerable companies of spiritual beings, good and bad, and of both sexes, some of whom were created long before Adam; and there are many shrines dedicated to reputed saints all over the Muhammedan world which are regarded with the utmost reverence.

[1] El Korân.


MAP OF THE REGION
EAST OF THE JORDAN
OR
BASHAN, GILEAD
AND
MOAB.
Scale of Miles
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
36
36 30'
32
31 30'
36°
36°30'
DEAD SEA
Jerash
GERASA
Relmun
Dibbin
Burmeh
Tell Deir 'Alla
Mukhadel
Dhahab
Sihan
'Ain 'Allan
Khirbet el Basha
Jebel Osh'a
Jebel Jil'ad
MT. GILEAD
El Bûk'ah
Es Salt
Râs ez Zurka
Kul'at ez Zurka
Jebelhâ
JOGBEHAH
Yâjûz
Ammân
RABBATH-AMMON,
(PHILADELPHIA)
Khirbet Sar
Tell Nimrin
BETH-NIMRAH
'Arâk el Emir
TYRE
Abu Nugla
Tell Kefrein
SHITTIM
Tell el Hammam
ABEL-SHITTIM THE PLAINS OF MOAB
'Ain Hesbân
El 'Al
ELEALEH
Hesbân
HESHBON
Tell Ektanu
BETH-HARAN
Jebel Neba
NEBO
Jebel Siagbab
PISGAH
Mountains of Abarim
Tell es Suweimeh
BETH-JESHIMOTH
Mâdeba
MEDEBA
Ma'in
BAAL-MEON
Callirrhoe
Hot Springs
M'khaur
MACHÆRUS
Dhibân
DIBON
Mushatta
Ziza
Derb el Hajj
Source of the Jabbok
Burzeh
HOBAH


MAP OF THE REGION
EAST OF THE JORDAN
OR
BASHAN, GILEAD
AND
MOAB.
Scale of Miles
DAMASCUS
ITUREA
(GAULANITIS)
AURANITIS
RABBATH AMMON
Mushatta
Ziza
DEAD SEA

Pilgrimages are made to those shrines, prayers and sacrifices are there offered to the saints, and various rites and ceremonies performed which it is impossible to distinguish from actual worship. Thus the saint is invoked, and the invisible spiritual beings propitiated, and in reality the followers of the prophet are practically superstitious and idolatrous, notwithstanding his fierce denunciation of the worship of any being other than God alone. Moslems believe in the resurrection of the body, in a general judgment at the last day, with subsequent rewards and punishments, and in a future life in paradise—a place of gardens and fountains—amidst never-fading scenes of luxury, and in the enjoyment of eternal delights. The "true believers" deserve paradise who have faith, and according to the measure of their good works so will their portion be in that promised abode of the blest.

Every Moslem is required to pray, to give alms, to fast, and to make pilgrimages; they are forbidden to eat certain meats, and the use of wine is strictly prohibited. As "in the beginning," so now "the evening and the morning" constitute the day, and the Moslem is directed to commence his daily prayers at sunset. Prayer may be offered at any time, or on any spot not polluted, but it is forbidden in baths and a few other places. As you are already aware, the regular and appointed times for prayer are five, and Moslems are obliged to perform certain ablutions before engaging in their devotions. Those ablutions consist in washing the face, hands, arms, head, neck, mouth, ears, nostrils, and feet, and, like nearly every important action performed by a Mussulman, these are begun with the formula, "In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate." Friday is the Moslem Sabbath, because Adam was created on that day of the week, and also because the resurrection is to take place on that day; hence its name, el Jhûm'ah, the assembly. Muhammedans do not abstain from transacting business or following their usual avocations on Friday, but the noonday services in the mosks are more varied and prolonged.

Next to the most important duty of prayer is that of alms-giving. Alms were at first both obligatory and voluntary, but now they are freely bestowed, and may be dispensed either in money or in kind. The least amount should not fall short of a fortieth, but

many give a far greater proportion of their income in charity and alms. Bread may be thrown to the dogs in the street, and money distributed among the poor and needy followers of the prophet, but it is forbidden to give alms to the infidel Christian, and to aid the unbelieving Jew. "During the month of Ramadân, in which the Korân was revealed," Moslems are required to abstain from eating and drinking, nor can they smoke, from daylight to sunset. That rigid fast is obligatory, even upon children, "but whoever is sick, or on a journey, he shall fast the like number of days."[1] The nights being given up to feasting and revelry, there is no great hardship in that fast when Ramadân occurs in winter; but during the long, hot days of summer the suffering is very great, especially among the working-classes. As the Muhammedan year is composed of twelve lunar months, Ramadân retrogrades through the entire circuit of months in about thirty-three years and a half, so that during my residence in this country that long fast has occurred in all times and seasons, from midwinter to midsummer.

But the preparations for our journey through Bashan and Gilead, and the region "beyond Jordan eastward," are completed. The mules have been loaded, and the muleteers are ready to proceed, for an early start is necessary this morning in order to reach the place where we are to encamp to-night.

I notice that you have increased the number of our caravan.

The regions we are to pass through are entirely destitute of markets, nor can our store of provisions be replenished until we reach es Salt, on Mount Gilead, above the north-eastern end of the Dead Sea. The needed supplies for many days were, therefore, obtained here, and I have hired two additional mules to transport them. One of the muleteers is a Druse, the other is a Christian, and both are from the Haurân. As they are acquainted with the roads and the inhabitants of that district, they will often save us from the delay and annoyance of having to procure local guides, and they will add to our protection in that wild and lawless region.

We are now passing through the narrow suburb of the city called el Meidân, the Race-course, which extends southward along this broad street, or Derb el Haj, the pilgrims' road from Damascus

[1] El Korân.

to Mecca. Every Moslem who is able to do so is required to make "the pilgrimage to the house of God, el Haram," at Mecca. When that long journey, which usually occupies four months, is undertaken in the summer or in midwinter the suffering and loss of life is very great, and often only a small portion of "the pilgrims" ever return to their homes. Those who survive the pilgrimage are always thereafter dignified with the title of Haj, an honor bestowed alike upon the Muhammedan devotee from Mecca and the pious Christian who visits Jerusalem, the Holy City, though the latter rarely avails himself of the meritorious distinction. Damascus is the starting-place of the Syrian pilgrims, and the Pasha of the city is the Emîr el Haj. He is expected to accompany the sacred Mahmel, or canopy, which contains the covering sent every year by the Sultân for the Caaba at Mecca, but that pious duty is generally relegated to his representative.

The spectacle of the departure of the Haj from Damascus for that city is quite imposing, is it not?

To the European it is altogether unique, but to those familiar with Muhammedan religious processions the difference is entirely in the degree of reverence paid to the Mahmel, and in the greater display of fanatical feeling by those who take part in the showy pageant. Motley crowds of men, women, and children of every age and size throng this thoroughfare in the Meidân, line the roadway on either side, fill the shops, the windows, and the roofs of the houses along the whole length of Derb el Haj—the men dressed in garments of various shapes and every shade of color, the women enveloped in white izârs, their faces hardly concealed by thin and gaudy veils, and the children decked out in tawdry tinsel and protected from "the evil eye" by mystic amulets and charms.

The Mahmel, carried upon the back of a special camel, is a canopy of green silk supported on silver posts and surmounted by a gilded ball and crescent. It is followed by the Emîr el Haj and his guard, consisting of a detachment of irregular cavalry and an escort of Bedawîn mounted on camels. Then come the pilgrims, whose number is growing less every year. They perform the journey on camels, though a few ride horses and mules, and the rich even hire palanquins for themselves or their families. The procession along

the Meidân is preceded, surrounded, and followed by a noisy and tumultuous rabble of men, women, and children, which imparts neither dignity nor order to the movements of the caravan.

Similar scenes are witnessed here on the return of the Haj from Mecca, but the pilgrims then come in groups, straggling along, with no attempt at parade or to present a grand spectacle. The burning sun has tanned them to a dark bronze hue; their garments are travel-stained, dusty, and ragged, and their appearance is forlorn and woe-begone to the last degree. They could, indeed, fit out another Gibeonite embassy with "old sacks upon their asses, and [water] bottles, old and rent, and bound up; and old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision dry and mouldy"—no doubt like the "remainder biscuit" after a voyage round the world.[1]

This unpretending city gate at the southern end of the Meidân which we are now approaching is called Bâb Allah, because through it the Haj passes when commencing the long, trying, and perilous journey to the "House of God," in Mecca. Bâb Allah, the gate of God! "but it might, with more propriety, be named Bâb el Maut, the Gate of Death," as Burckhardt remarks; "for scarcely a third ever returns of those whom a devout adherence to their religion, or the hope of gain, impel to this journey."[2] Most of the pilgrims from the northern parts of the Turkish empire now pass through the Suez Canal by steamers to Jiddah, the port of Mecca on the Red Sea; and similar facilities are also availed of by the pilgrims from Egypt, northern Africa, and elsewhere; and if the merit of the pilgrimage is thereby somewhat diminished, so also is the hardship and loss of life in a still greater degree.

In comparing the advantages conferred upon the world by Muhammedanism, with its attendant evils, Mr. Muir may be thought to hold the balance with too even a hand, but some of his observations are weighty and well worth remembering. "We may freely concede," he says, "that it banished forever many of the darker elements of superstition which had for ages shrouded the Peninsular [of Arabia]. Idolatry vanished before the battle-cry of Islam; the doctrine of the unity and infinite perfections of God, and of a

[1] Josh. ix. 3–6. [2] Travels in Syria, etc. pp. 52, 53.

special all-pervading Providence, became a living principle in the hearts and lives of the followers of Mahomet, even as it had in his own. An absolute surrender and submission to the Divine will—the very name of Islâm—was demanded as the first requirement of the religion. Nor are social virtues wanting. Brotherly love is inculcated within the circle of the faith; orphans are to be protected, and slaves treated with consideration; intoxicating drinks are prohibited, and Mahometanism may boast of a degree of temperance unknown to any other creed.

"Yet these benefits have been purchased at a costly price. Setting aside considerations of minor import, three radical evils flow from the faith, in all ages and in every country, and must continue to flow so long as the Coran is the standard of belief. First: Polygamy, divorce, and slavery are maintained and perpetuated—striking as they do at the root of public morals, poisoning domestic life, and disorganizing society. Second: freedom of judgment in religion is crushed and annihilated. The sword is the inevitable penalty for the denial of Islam. Toleration is unknown. Third: a barrier has been interposed against the reception of Christianity. They labor under a miserable delusion who suppose that Mahometanism paves the way for a purer faith. No system could have been devised with more consummate skill for shutting out the nations over which it has sway from the light of truth. Idolatrous Arabia—judging from the analogy of other nations—might have been aroused to spiritual life, and to the adoption of the faith of Jesus; Mahometan Arabia is, to the human eye, sealed against the benign influences of the Gospel. Many a flourishing land in Africa and in Asia which once rejoiced in the light and liberty of Christianity is now overspread by a gross darkness and a stubborn barbarism. It is as if their day of grace had come and gone, and there remained to them 'no more sacrifice for sins.' That a brighter day will yet dawn on these countries we may not doubt; but the history of the past and the condition of the present is not the less true and sad. The sword of Mahomet and the Coran are the most fatal enemies of civilization, liberty, and truth which the world has yet known."[1]

I should like to emphasize most of these remarks of Mr. Muir.

[1] Muir's Life of Mahomet, vol. iv. pp. 320–322.

especially the last of them ; and it would be easy to add to the list of evils conferred upon the world by Muhammedanism many others so weighty as to sink Islâm, the religion of the "Illiterate Prophet," forever in the profound gulf of utter condemnation.

We are now favored with a tolerably smooth and very wide road, bordered on each side by groves of olive-trees.

It is the continuation of Derb el Haj, and extends southward in nearly a straight line for more than an hour, but not at this unusual width. No doubt it was made thus broad in this immediate vicinity to accommodate the crowds, the pilgrims, and their camels that congregate here at the commencement of the Haj. The bridges over the watercourses are constructed very low and broad, to facilitate the passage of the caravans during the rainy season—a great convenience, as I have found, after a heavy storm of rain in winter.

This district immediately around Damascus to the south, the east, and the north-east is called the Ghûtah. It includes the city and the greater part of the region irrigated by the Barada and its numerous canals. Of course it is exceedingly fertile wherever the water extends over the plain. Abulfeda says of it: "The Ghûtah of Damascus is one of the four paradises which are the most excellent of the beautiful places of the earth, but it excels the other three." And the Moslem legend reminds us that Muhammed refused to enter this charming region, declaring that, as man could have but one paradise, he chose to have his in the other world. Notwithstanding these flattering commendations, I have found many places in the Ghûtah neglected and barren, and, though the plain of Damascus is crowded with villages, nearly a hundred by actual count, most of them are wretched hamlets, with nothing attractive about them, and one is surprised at the almost total absence of important ruins on this great plain. To the south-east of the Ghûtah is the Merj, extending to the lakes, and west and south of our road is the district of Wady el 'Ajam.

This plain of Damascus is not so level as it appears from the outlook near Kubbet en Nŭsr, north-west of the city, and those surrounding hills, from their dark color, must be of volcanic origin.

The range on the left is called Jebel el Aswad, the black mountain, and the basaltic stones so largely used in building the khâns,

mosks, and other public edifices of Damascus are brought from quarries in those hills. We have now left the plain and begin to descend into the valley of the A'waj, supposed to be the Pharpar, the second river of Damascus, mentioned by Naaman, the Syrian leper. In about an hour we will reach the long bridge of several arches over the river east of the village of el Kesweh.

The valley lies much lower than the general level of the surrounding country, and the banks of the river are bordered by thousands of tall silver-leaved poplars, by which the course of the stream can be traced both east and west for a long distance.

Its Arabic name, A'waj, means crooked, and was probably given to indicate that peculiarity in the ever-winding way of the river. It drains the south-eastern slopes of Hermon, traverses from west to east the district of Wady el 'Ajam, and, after passing through the rough and rocky region eastward from the village of el Kesweh, it meanders over the plain, and is finally lost in the marshy lake called Bahret Hîjâneh.

What is the name of that village above us on the right? It appears to be a considerable place, with mosks, minarets, and other public buildings; and these winding and well-wooded banks of the river, the tall poplar trees, and the green meadows on either side of the stream, are decidedly pretty.

That is el Kesweh, and it is inhabited principally by Moslems.

Here also is a spacious khân, with many native travellers about it, and even several Bedawîn with their horses and camels.

Like them, we will rest awhile at this inn and refresh ourselves with a cup of "black coffee." From here on these primitive wayside institutions become few and far between, as we advance into the region east of the Jordan until we reach es Salt, on Mount Gilead.

The A'waj, or Pharpar, is a much larger stream than I expected.

Once when I crossed over this substantial bridge below el Kesweh the river was running full up to the top of the arches, and a considerable part of the narrow valley was under water. Many years before I had crossed and recrossed it on my way to S'âs'â, and then got the impression that it was a small stream, but on that occasion it was everywhere unfordable, and the volume of water in it appeared to be nearly equal to that of the Barada. It was then,

however, exceptionally large, owing to recent rains and the melting of the snow on the eastern slopes of Hermon, or Jebel esh Sheikh. The main permanent tributaries of this river come from fountains which rise near the villages of el 'Arny and Beit Jenn, on the south-eastern slopes of Hermon, and, uniting in the neighborhood of S'âs'â, form the Sabirâny, the local name for the A'waj between the villages of el Kesweh and Beit Sâbir.

It is also re-enforced by small streams from that part of the mountain, one of which comes down Wady Barbar, and the name of that valley is supposed to preserve, in its Arabic form, the ancient Hebrew word Pharpar. I visited one of those permanent sources at the fountain called 'Ain Menbej, a short distance eastward from Beit Jenn. The stream issues from a deep cavern extending under the mountain, and at times, according to native accounts, there is a great rush of water from it, accompanied with a loud rumbling noise. The volume of water thus discharged is said to be full of fish. When I was there the fountain was comparatively quiet, but there were plenty of small fishes in the deep pool within the mouth of the cavern. 'Ain Menbej is probably an intermitting fountain, like those found in other places in this country.

We have thus far followed the regular Haj road, which leads from Damascus to Mecca, but from el Kesweh the pilgrims continue southward along the ancient Roman highway to Sŭnamein and Mezârîb. Our road, however, trends a little to the eastward, and gradually ascends the slope of Jebel Mâni'a.

I am surprised to find the country so sparsely inhabited. There is not a village in sight on either side of the path, and only a small part of the land appears to be under cultivation.

The villages whose inhabitants till the land in this neighborhood are hid away in the ravines of Jebel Mâni'a, and the first inhabited place along our route is Deir 'Aly, about two hours distant from el Kesweh. As we rise to a greater elevation the views of Jebel esh Sheikh, towering high above the surrounding district and rocky ridges of el Bellân, are truly magnificent. Aklîm el Bellân, as that region is called, extends southward along the foot-hills of Hermon from the dreary plateau of es Sahra, north-west of Damascus, to the district of el Jeidûr, the ancient Iturea. Large parts of both dis-

tricts are encumbered with volcanic rock and incapable of profitable cultivation. Bellân, as you are aware, is the Arabic name of the low, tangled thorn-bush which covers a large part of this country. It is the poterium spinosum, and, from its great abundance in that region, it probably gave the name Bellân to the entire district.

I have repeatedly passed through Aklîm el Bellân, and once, on my way from Damascus to the summit of Hermon, night overtook us as we entered a dark defile of the mountain, and our guide conducted us to a ruined castle in Wady Barbar called Kŭl'at Jendal, near the village of the same name. That region was then in a disturbed state, owing to an uprising of the Druses, and we found the old castle occupied by a band of highway robbers. After learning who we were they allowed us to enter, and we remained there that night unmolested. In the morning they sent a guard of their number to protect us as far on our way as they thought was necessary. Our road led up a long ravine with a gradual ascent until we reached the water-shed at the head of the pass into Wady Shib'a. From the top of the pass we turned to the right and ascended northward along the edge of the ridge leading up the mountain-side, and in about two hours we reached the ruined temple now called Kŭsr 'Antar, which once crowned the summit of Hermon. The ascent of Jebel esh Sheikh from Kŭl'at Jendal is less fatiguing, according to my experience, than any other, but it is entirely deserted, and some of the gorges that descend from the mountain eastward to the plain far below are extremely wild and picturesque.

The district south of the Ghûtah, through which we have been riding, and which is traversed by the river A'waj, is called Wady el 'Ajam, the valley of the Persians, but when and how that name came to be applied to this region is unknown. The district extends eastward from Aklîm el Bellân to Bahret Hîjâneh, and, though mountainous, rough, and rocky, much of it is well watered and thoroughly cultivated. There are more than thirty villages in Wady el 'Ajam, many of which lie west of the Haj road, and are principally inhabited by Moslems. El Kesweh is one of the largest and most flourishing, and the small hamlet of Deir 'Aly, ahead of us, one of the poorest and most dilapidated.

The entire region south-west of our road to the valley of the

Jordan is given up to wandering tribes of Bedawîn Arabs and Kŭrds, and even they abandon the more elevated parts of it in winter, and descend to the sheltered ravines below, to escape the fierce winds that then sweep over it. They are sometimes so cold as to kill not only the flocks, but their shepherds also.

Many years ago we rode direct from Damascus to S'âs'â, and, though it was in the early part of May, we nearly perished by the way-side, owing to a most pitiless gale of wind. When we reached the dilapidated, castle-like khân at S'âs'â my companion was speechless, and so chilled that he had to be lifted off his horse and have his limbs rubbed for nearly an hour to restore the circulation. S'âs'â is a miserable village, about ten miles west of el Kesweh, on the south side of Nahr el Jennâny, a branch of the A'waj. Formerly it had two large caravansaries, one of which was fortified with towers and buttresses, and that part of it still standing is now occupied as a modern khân. We found it crowded with fellâhîn, or peasants, who had taken shelter within it from the cold wind-storm, and had kindled a large fire in one of the dingy vaults of the old khân, which contributed greatly to their comfort as well as our own.

At S'âs'â an ancient road from Damascus to the coast passed through the middle of Aklîm el Jeidûr in a south-westerly direction to Kuneitirah, and thence down to Jisr Benât Ya'kôb over the Jordan below Lake Huleh, and southward to Tiberias and Jerusalem, or westward to the sea. There are very few villages along that route between S'âs'â and the Jordan; and el Kuneitirah, which is the central station, is now occupied by a few peasants only. The khân and other buildings are in ruins, and the place, though well supplied with water, is often deserted.

It was probably along that road that the over-zealous Saul hurried onward toward Damascus on his cruel mission. He would have crossed the Jordan on the bridge of Jacob's Daughters, and pressed forward by Kuneitirah and S'âs'â to Jûneh, where he would get the first view of the plain of Damascus; and probably, when about to enter the Ghûtah, not far from that village, he fell to the ground overpowered by that great light which suddenly shone from heaven round about him. This is, of course, mere inference from the line of travel he would be likely to select. No name is

given to the place where Saul's miraculous conversion occurred. We are only told that it was "near Damascus," and before he entered the city.[1] Evidently the place was not the one which is now pointed out on the eastern side of the city; and a tradition dating back to the twelfth century places the actual spot near Jûneh.

It has taken nearly five hours from Damascus to reach this Druse village of Deir 'Aly, and we can spare a few minutes only for rest and lunch, for half our day's ride to el Musmeih, on the northern border of the Lejah, remains to be accomplished.

There seems to be nothing of special interest in or about this forlorn and dilapidated village.

It evidently occupies the site of an ancient town, and there are several Greek inscriptions on old stones built into the walls of these ruinous houses. In company with a party of English and American friends, I spent a night at this place a few years ago. The day had been rainy, and the evening air was chilly and uncomfortable, and all night long we were serenaded by an innumerable multitude of frogs in a pond near our tents. In the morning we copied some of the inscriptions. According to one of them, on the lintel of a door of a private house, the name of this place in the fourth century was Leboda; and its modern name of Deir 'Aly may have been given to it from the ruins of a church which, according to the same inscription, belonged to the heretical sect of the Marcionites. There are several other short inscriptions built into the walls of these miserable hovels, and over the door of a ruined apartment in the court of the sheikh's house is carved an altar, a scroll with a few Greek letters, the figure of a bird, probably meant for a dove, and a palm-branch—all clearly cut and well preserved. The present inhabitants are quite proud that their village had an ancient name and history, even though Christian and heretical.

Who were the Marcionites?

A sect that derived the name from Marcion, a native of Sinope, on the Black Sea, and a religious sceptic of the second century. Marcion held that the God of the Old Testament was the creator of matter which was essentially evil, and the source of evil in this world, and that he was not the God of the New Testament. He

[1] Acts ix. 3.

also rejected all the gospels except that of Luke, and he even altered it to accord with his own teachings. He denied the resurrection of the body and other essential doctrines held by the orthodox, and by his zeal in disseminating his religious opinions he caused great controversy in the Church.

Marcion was repeatedly excommunicated, and finally cut off entirely from Christian fellowship. Subsequently he became the head of the sect that bore his name, and was both dreaded and hated, as the following anecdote makes sufficiently evident. He was anxious to claim acquaintance with Polycarp, and, meeting him on one occasion, Marcion asked if he knew him. "I know thee as the first-born of Satan," was the repellent and curt reply. It does not appear that Marcion ever visited this part of the country, but his doctrines spread extensively among the Eastern churches.

It is strange to find the name of such an ancient schismatic sect established in the early days of Christianity at this now forlorn and wretched hamlet of ignorant Druses, and I suppose that many of the "initiated" among that peculiar people would accept most of the heretical speculations of Marcion.

The district west of us is far more varied and interesting than a large part of the featureless region over which we have been riding since leaving Deir 'Aly. It is now called el Jeidûr, and the name was probably derived from Jetur, one of the twelve sons of Ishmael, whose descendants appear to have inhabited that region.[1] In the fifth chapter of 1st Chronicles we read that the trans-Jordanic tribes —"the sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, valiant men, able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war, made war with the Hagarites [Ishmael's descendants], with Jetur, and Nepish, and Nodab. And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that were with them. And the children of the half tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land; they increased from Bashan unto Baal-hermon, and Senir, and unto Mount Hermon."[2]

Though the entire country east of the Jordan to Hermon, including, of course, the possessions of Jetur, was thus practically subdued, the Hagarites were not exterminated, but they were held

[1] Gen. xxv. 15, 16. [2] 1 Chron. v. 18–23.

in subjection by the two tribes and a half, who dwelt in the land "until the captivity." After that event, and until the return of the Jews from Babylon, the inhabitants of this part of the country appear to have regained their independence. But after the conquest of Syria by Alexander the Great, B.C. 333, the various tribes in this region came under the sway of the Ptolemies and the Seleucidæ, and the Greeks, according to their custom, changed the name of the ancient Jetur into Iturea.

During the interregnum between the revolt of the Jews against the Syrian kings and the establishment of the Roman empire in this land, and about the beginning of the second century B.C., we learn from Josephus that Aristobulus, one of the Maccabean princes, who had assumed the kingly title, "made war against Iturea, and added a great part of it to Judea, and compelled the inhabitants, if they would continue in that country [to become Jews], and to live according to the Jewish laws."[1] About forty years later Syria was declared a Roman province by Pompey, and Iturea was comprised within it. And in Luke we read that Philip, the son of Herod the Great, was tetrarch of Iturea at the time when "the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness."[2] He probably obtained it from his father, and it seems to have remained in the Herodian family until the death of Herod Agrippa, the last of that line, when it reverted to the Roman empire.

The subsequent history of Iturea is essentially the same as that of Damascus, of which it became a dependency, and has remained so to this day. There is no reason to doubt the identification of the modern district of el Jeidûr with at least a part of the possessions of Jetur, the son of Ishmael, and of the Greco-Roman province of Iturea. The names are nearly the same, and the position of the present district accords with the general situation given to it in the Old and New Testaments, and by Josephus and others. El Jeidûr is comparatively a large district, having Wady el 'Ajam and Aklîm el Bellân on the north; the lower ranges and foot-hills of Hermon on the west; el Jaulân, the ancient Golan, and el Lejah, Trachonitis, on the south; the latter also forming its eastern boundary, and separated from it by the present Haj road only.

[1] Ant. xiii. 11, 3.

[2] Luke iii. 1, 2.

There is no natural division between the districts of el Jeidûr and el Jaulân, but an imaginary line, drawn from Dan over the southern end of Hermon and across the plain in a south-easterly direction to the Haj road, would sufficiently indicate their relative positions. El Jaulân was called Gaulanitis by the Greeks, and that, as well as its present Arabic name, was derived from Golan, given by Moses to the Levites, and appointed to be one of the three cities of refuge "on this side Jordan towards the sunrising."[1] Its length is from north to south along the shore of Lake Merom and the Sea of Galilee, which form its western border down to the river Jarmuk, the ancient Heiromax.

Both districts of el Jeidûr and el Jaulân are lava plateaus, over two thousand feet above the level of the sea, and much of the land is destitute of water in summer. But, owing to the great elevation of the northern portions, that region is cold in winter, and often covered with snow. In the spring, however, it abounds in rich pasture, and the Wuld 'Aly, a Bedawîn tribe, then take possession of it with their countless camels and numerous flocks of sheep and goats. I have crossed both districts in different directions without finding an inhabited village or an acre of land that was not covered with lava bowlders. The entire country was then nearly deserted, and the Kŭrds and Bedawîns I met with were robbers: justifying in that respect the traditional reputation of the ancient Hagarites and the Greco-Roman Itureans. In both districts there are ruins of old towns and deserted villages to the extraordinary number of over one hundred and thirty; but of inhabited places there are not more than fifty, and while at least three-fourths of the former are to be seen in the Jaulân, the same proportion of the latter are found in the district of el Jeidûr.

But to return to our present surroundings. It has taken us an hour, brisk riding, from Deir 'Aly to this semi-dilapidated hamlet called ez Zughbâr, and half an hour of slow progress through a barren waste covered with black lava bowlders, the *débris* of a world once on fire, will bring us to the village of el Merjâny. That name was probably given to it from the merj, or meadow, north-west of it, from whence comes this little brook of good water. We must

[1] Deut. iv. 41–43.

fill our "bottles" at this place, for we may not find any water fit to drink at el Musmeih, where we are to encamp. The plenteous supply of water here accounts for the fact that these scattered ruins are partially inhabited while so many other places along this exposed frontier are wholly abandoned. El Merjâny was evidently an ancient site, and some of the houses and other edifices were large and well built; but no inscriptions have been found among the ruins to tell what name it bore in former times.

From here on, for much of the distance to Musmeih, we must wade through a loose grayish soil, like the remains of a great ash-heap, free from stones, and sparsely covered with clumps of southernwood and other shrubs and bushes. Road there is none, and the Druse muleteer directs our course by some landmarks on the distant border of the Lejah, not far from el Musmeih, seen by him, but which are quite invisible to me.

From the top of this hill near Merjâny, though it is not very lofty, we look out over what appears to be a boundless plateau stretching far away to the east and south-east. What is the nature of the country in that direction?

It has been rarely visited by travellers, and comparatively little is known about it. Burckhardt, in one of his tours from Damascus through the Haurân, passed from el Merjâny round the eastern border of the Lejah. As we shall follow the western side, a brief *résumé* of his account will be interesting, and it will also help to beguile the monotony and weariness of the next two hours' ride.

In half an hour from el Merjâny to the south-east Burckhardt came to 'Amûd es Sŭbh, or Column of the Morning, "an insulated pillar," with a high pedestal, standing in the plain, of the Ionic order, built of black lava, and about thirty feet high. There were no inscriptions upon it, but from broken fragments of columns around the pillar he supposed that a small temple may have stood there, and "the remains of a subterraneous aqueduct, extending from the village towards the spot where the column stands, are yet visible." Two hours from Merjâny is el Bŭrâk, "a ruined town situated on the north-east corner of the Lejah: there is no large building of any consequence here, but there are many private habitations." In the interior of one house and on the outside wall of

another, among the ruins of el Bŭrâk, Burckhardt saw two well-preserved Greek inscriptions, which he copied.[1]

Dr. Porter, who visited el Bŭrâk many years after, and spent a night in one of those "private habitations," thus describes it: "The house seemed to have undergone little change from the time its old master had left it, and yet the thick nitrous crust on the floor showed that it had been deserted for long ages. The walls were prefect, nearly five feet thick, built of large blocks of hewn stones without lime or cement of any kind. The roof was formed of large slabs of the same black basalt, lying as regularly and jointed as closely as if the workmen had just completed them. They measured twelve feet in length, eighteen inches in breadth, and six inches in thickness. The ends rested on a plain stone cornice, projecting about a foot from each side wall.

"The chamber was twenty feet long, twelve wide, and ten high. The outer door was a slab of stone four and a half feet high, four wide, and eight inches thick. It hung upon pivots formed of projecting parts of the slab working in sockets in the lintel and threshold, and though so massive, I was able to open and shut it with ease. At one end of the room was a small window with a stone shutter. An inner door, also of stone, but of finer workmanship, and not quite so heavy as the other, admitted to a chamber of the same size and appearance. From it a much larger door communicated with a third chamber, to which there was a descent by a flight of stone steps. This was a spacious hall equal in width to the two rooms, and about twenty-five feet long by twenty high. A semicircular arch was thrown across it, supporting the stone roof, and a gate so large that camels could pass in and out opened on the street. The gate was of stone, and in its place; but some rubbish had accumulated on the threshold, and it appeared to have been open for ages.

"Such were the internal arrangements of this strange old mansion. It had only one story, and its simple, massive style of architecture gave evidence of a very remote antiquity. On a large stone which formed the lintel of the gate-way there was a Greek inscription; but it was so high up that I was unable to decipher it, though

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., pp. 214, 215.

I could see that the letters were of the oldest type. It is probably the same which was copied by Burckhardt, and which bears a date apparently equivalent to the year B.C. 306."[1]

According to Burckhardt, there were "two saltpetre manufactories at el Bŭrâk, in which the saltpetre is procured by boiling the earth dug up among the ruins of the town. The boilers of these manufactories are heated by brushwood brought from the desert, as there is little wood in the Lejah about el Bŭrâk."[2] At that time there were many such manufactories in all parts of the Lejah and adjacent regions, but they are now nearly all abandoned.

Continuing his journey, Burckhardt "engaged a man at el Bŭrâk to conduct [him] along the Lufh or limits of the Lejah. This eastern part is called el Liwa, from Wady Liwa, a winter torrent which descends from Jebel Haurân," far to the south-east, rising near a village called Nimreh, below which for some distance it is called Wady Nimreh. It flows northward along the entire eastern border of the Lejah, "filling in its course the reservoirs of all the ancient towns situated there. In some places Wady Liwa approaches close to the Lejah, and in others advances for a mile into the plain; its banks were covered with the most luxuriant herbage, of which little use is made, the Arabs of the Lejah being afraid to pass beyond its limits, from the almost continual state of warfare in which they live with the powerful tribe of the 'Anazeh and the government of Damascus; while the 'Anazeh, on the other hand, are shy of approaching too near the Lejah, from fear of the nightly robberies and of the fire-arms of the Arabs who inhabit it. The laborers in the saltpetre manufactories are Druses, whose reputation for individual courage and national spirit keeps the Arabs at a respectful distance. The Liwa empties into Bahret el Merj [or Hijâneh], seven or eight hours east of Damascus."[3]

Burckhardt slept at el Khulkhŭleh, "like all the ancient towns in the Haurân, built entirely with stone." There he collected the names of several ruined villages and tells, with ruins on or around them, to the east and south-east of Khulkhŭleh. The direction of his route from that place "was sometimes south-east, sometimes

[1] The Giant Cities of Bashan, etc., pp. 26, 27.

[2] Travels in Syria, etc., p. 214.

[3] Travels in Syria, etc., pp. 216, 217.

south, following the windings of the Lejah and the Liwa. In four hours [he] reached Um ez Zeitûn, a village inhabited by Druses," having passed nine villages and towns in ruins, which "prove the once flourishing state of the Lejah. The advantages of a wady like the Liwa are incalculable in these countries, where we always find that cultivation follows the direction of the winter torrents, as it follows the Nile in Egypt; and the inhabitants make the best use of the water after the great rains have ceased to irrigate their fields and fill the reservoirs which supply both men and cattle with water till the return of the rainy season."

"Um ez Zeitûn is inhabited by thirty or forty Druse families. It appears, by the extent of its ruins, to have been formerly a town of some note. I here copied several inscriptions." Burckhardt had intended to spend the night at Um ez Zeitûn, but found the Druses very ill-disposed towards him. "It was generally reported," he says, "that I had [previously] discovered a hid treasure at Shuhba, near this place, and it was supposed that I had now returned to carry off what I had then left behind. I had to combat against this story at almost every place, but I was nowhere so rudely received as at this village, where I escaped ill-treatment only by assuming a very imposing air, and threatening, with many oaths, that if I lost a single hair of my beard, the Pasha would levy an avania of many purses on the village."[1] From that inhospitable place Burckhardt continued next day southward by Suleim and 'Atîl to es Suweideh, but, as we shall there come in contact with his route, we need not follow it any farther at present.

It would be very interesting to pass through that region and to explore the country beyond it east of the Lejah.

It was the ancient Batanaea, and is still called Ard el Bathanyeh, the land of Bathanyeh, from a town of that name which occupies the site of Batanis, the capital of the Greek and Roman province. That region is mentioned by Josephus in connection with Trachonitis and Auranitis as being subject to Philip, the son of Herod the Great and Cleopatra, and the same whose tetrarchy is alluded to by Luke.[2]

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., pp. 218–220.

[2] Ant. xvii. 11, 4: B. J. ii. 6, 3; ii. 12, 8; iii. 3, 5: Luke iii. 1.

El Bathanyeh was explored by M. Waddington, who gives inscriptions from about forty ancient towns which he includes within the province of Batanaea. But perhaps he did not intend to arrange his inscriptions with strict reference to the old geographical boundaries of the provinces, for a number of places are mentioned in his group which certainly belonged to Trachonitis; that is, the Lejah and others on the south and west of Jebel Haurân were not connected with Batanaea. The ancient names are still preserved, and several sites with similar Arabic names have been identified with places mentioned by classic writers. But the old towns are nearly all deserted, though many of the houses, with their remarkable stone walls, stone roofs, stone doors and window-shutters, are still almost perfect, and would require very little repair by the natives of that region to make them habitable again.

"The name Ard el Bathanyeh," says Dr. Porter, "though well known to the natives, is not much used by strangers. The region is generally called 'Jebel Haurân,' or 'Jebel ed Druze.' It extends from the plain near the conspicuous hill [on the north] called Tell el Khaledîyeh to Sulkhad on the south, and from Kunawât to the borders of the great plain on the east. The whole of the province is exceedingly picturesque. The mountains are well wooded, with forests of evergreen oak, and the sides terraced. In the northern part, around Bathanyeh and Shŭka, the slopes are gentle, and the soil the richest in the Haurân. Along the whole eastern sides, as I was informed, and in part saw, the slopes resemble those on the north. Over the mountains and through the vales the pastures are the most luxuriant in Syria. There is a pleasing variety, too, in the landscape that is seldom witnessed in this land, and the natural beauties are enhanced by the vast numbers of ruined towns and villages. Little peaks are always in view as one wanders along, crowned with temple, castle, or crumbling tower, while the graceful forms of lofty columns are here and there seen shooting up through the green foliage. The whole of these mountains are basalt, and the two loftiest summits, Abu Tumeis [in the north] and Kuleib Haurân [on the south] were probably at one time volcanoes. Their elevation is about five thousand feet."[1]

[1] Bibliotheca Sacra, etc., October, 1856, pp. 799, 800.

When the Egyptian army, under Ibrahim Pasha, about forty-seven years ago, conquered the Lejah after several severe battles, many of the Druses who had taken refuge there escaped into the region of el Bathanyeh. Some of their sheikhs, with whom I was acquainted, finally returned to their homes on Lebanon, and they spoke in high terms of the beauty and fertility of that country. They also described a region in the dreary wilderness east of it called el Hârrah, or the burnt district, which, they said, was entirely destitute of water, and that even the Bedawîn Arabs of the desert could hardly pass through it.

That "burnt district" is a veritable *terra incognita*, I suppose, and must ever remain an undiscovered region.

The description of the Hârrah given by those Druse sheikhs accords in the main with that of the only two Europeans who have attempted to explore it. In the autumn of 1857 Mr. Cyril C. Graham accomplished a bold and hazardous tour through a considerable part of that district, and I remember listening with great interest to the narrative of his perils and privations after his return to Beirût. He subsequently prepared a report of his journey for the Royal Asiatic Society, which furnishes much reliable information in regard to that region.

El Hârrah is mostly a dreary, undulating plain, extending eastward and southward from Jebel Haurân for several days' journey—a desert waste, destitute of verdure and springs of water, with no running streams and but few trees, covered with fragments of black basaltic rock, and glowing under the fierce rays of the burning sun like a furnace—hence its significant name. There are a great number of wells in that region, and the ancient inhabitants must have depended mainly upon them for their supply of water; but they are now either "broken cisterns" or filled up with rubbish.

"The deserted though not ruined" places examined by Mr. Graham in the Hârrah were of the same general character as those of similar sites in the Haurân, having the same massive stone walls, stone doors, stone window-shutters, and stone roofs. But perhaps the most important discovery made by him in that burnt district was the finding, in different places, of numberless rock inscriptions. "I found," he says, "several such places, where every stone within

a given space bore the mark of some beast or other figure, with an accompanying inscription." And he thinks that "we have in those inscriptions specimens of a writing which, though not purely Himyaritic, is, nevertheless, very much allied to it."

"From reports brought by Arabs that there are innumerable rock inscriptions in the desert between the Haurân and the Euphrates," Mr. Graham is convinced "that one great race formerly overran all those parts, and eventually settled in southern Arabia, and formed the dynasties of the kings of whom we have more specially heard under the name of the Himyri." A few years after Mr. Graham's adventurous tour, Dr. J. G. Wetzstein, then Prussian Consul at Damascus, made an excursion into the Hârrah and the Safâh, north of it, a district remarkable for the number of its cone-shaped tells, the craters of extinct volcanoes. He also published an interesting account of his tour, especially in regard to the little known regions of es Safâh.

It seems to me that our guide is treating us to a specimen of the Hârrah, or burnt district, by the route he is conducting us. Our horses have been wearily plodding through this soft volcanic soil for the last hour and a half, sinking at every step over their fetlocks, to the great discomfort of both horse and rider. Mine is well-nigh exhausted and quite discouraged, and inclined to halt every few minutes to rest and take breath.

The temple at Musmeih is in sight, and we shall soon dismount at our tents, pitched in front of it.

September 17th. Evening.

The wild-looking Arabs who stared at us from amongst the ruins as we rode up to our tents had a very suspicious and sinister appearance.

This deserted city is only occupied now by a few Bedawîn from the Lejah, and our Druse muleteer, who is acquainted with some of them, says that they will not venture to molest us. The half a dozen or more petty tribes of Bedawîn who inhabit the Lejah, though nominally tributary to the Pasha of Damascus, have a far greater respect for the Druses in this region than for the Turkish authorities, and they frequently refuse to pay the annual tribute levied upon them. On such occasions they retire into the fast-

nesses of this rocky district, and bid defiance to the government troops sent against them. But, owing to the scarcity of water in the Lejah for their flocks and herds, they are eventually compelled to come to terms with the authorities, and a compromise is usually effected through the friendly mediation of some Druse sheikh.

During the spring and summer, the great nomadic tribes of the desert, when not in open rebellion against the Pasha, generally overrun the country east of the Jordan and the Haurân as far north as the Ghûtah of Damascus. But, as their relations with the government and the Druses are about as uncertain as their own with the Bedawîn of this region, it frequently happens that their hand is against every man, and every man's hand against them. Then travel in this part of the country is unsafe.

Is it not probable that the apostle Paul passed through the Lejah when he escaped from Damascus and "went into Arabia?"

It is, at least, possible. He appears to have remained in his retreat for a considerable time, for he did not go back to Jerusalem until three years after his return to Damascus. It is an interesting thought that, perhaps during those three years, the zealous apostle may have founded some of the churches which were greatly multiplied in the country east of the Jordan and the region around Damascus in the first and second centuries of the Christian era. Those early converts seem to have been inclined to embrace various doctrinal heresies, and Origen, though quite advanced in years, was summoned from Cæsarea more than once to bring them back to the orthodox faith; and in such benevolent missions that learned and eminent father was always successful.

The Lejah has been identified with "the region of Argob," a part of "the kingdom of Og," the giant "king of Bashan," which Moses "gave unto the half tribe of Manasseh, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants."[1] In the time of Solomon, about four hundred and thirty years later, "the region of Argob, which is in Bashan," was assigned to one of his purveyors with its "threescore great cities with walls and brazen bars."[2] We hear nothing further of Argob in the Bible for a thousand years or more, until after the reign of Herod the Great, when it is mentioned by

[1] Deut. iii. 3–5, 11, 13, 14.

[2] 1 Kings iv. 13.

Luke under its Greek name of Trachonitis, apparently equivalent to its ancient Hebrew designation of the rough or stony region.[1]

Josephus informs us that Uz, the great-grandson of Noah, "founded Trachonitis and Damascus: this country," he says, "lies between Palestine and Cœlesyria."[2] He also tells us that in the time of Herod "one Zenodorus became a partner with the robbers that inhabited the Trachonites, and so procured himself a larger income; for the inhabitants of those places live in a mad way, and pillage the country of the Damascenes. This way of robbery had been their usual practice, and they had no other way to get their living." He then gives a description of the extraordinay caverns of this district in which the robbers concealed themselves, their cattle, and their plunder. Their raids became so destructive that Augustus Cæsar "wrote to Varro [then 'proconsul' of Syria] to destroy those nests of robbers, and to give the land to Herod, that so by his care the neighboring countries might be no longer disturbed with these doings of the Trachonites."[3] Subsequently, Tiberius Cæsar gave this province to Philip, the son of Herod, and he became tetrarch of this region, as we know from the third chapter of Luke's Gospel. During the reign of Nero, Trachonitis was a part of the kingdom of Agrippa.[4] Very little is known about it from that time to the present day, except what can be inferred from the numerous inscriptions which have been found amongst the ruins of its temples, fortresses, and towns.

Argob and its Greek name, Trachonitis, are both supposed to have been given to this region on account of its rough, stony, and inaccessible nature; has its Arabic name the same significance?

Only by implication. The word Lejah, in a certain sense, refers to the act of resorting to a place for the purpose of protection, and Meljah would be the Arabic name for such an asylum; and this rocky wilderness of black lava is now, and probably always has been, the refuge of those who have been compelled to seek safety from their enemies and persecutors.

The Lejah is a district wholly unique, and is correctly described by Dr. Porter as "of an irregular oval shape, about twenty miles long by fourteen broad—the circumference [being] fifty-eight miles.

[1] Luke iii. 1. [2] Ant. i. 6, 4. [3] Ant. xv. 10, 1. [4] B. J. ii. 6, 3; iii. 3, 5.

Its border is as clearly defined as the line of a rocky coast, which it very much resembles. The surface is elevated from twenty to thirty feet above the surrounding plain. At a little distance it appears as flat as a sea; the only hills in it are Tell el 'Amârah and Tell Sumeid. The former is the loftier, and has an elevation of about three hundred feet.

The physical features of the Lejah are very remarkable. It is composed of black basalt, which appears to have issued from pores in the earth in a liquid state and to have flowed out until the plain was almost covered. Before cooling, its surface was agitated by some powerful agency, and it was afterwards shattered and rent by internal convulsions and vibrations. There are in many places deep fissures with rugged, broken edges, while in other places are jagged heaps of rock that seem not to have been sufficiently heated to flow, but were forced upwards and then rent and shattered. The rock is filled with air-bubbles; it is as hard as flint, and emits a sharp metallic sound when struck."[1]

Although barren and incapable of cultivation, and almost entirely destitute of fountains and streams, yet there are several "pasturing places" in and about the Lejah, and it is dotted with the remains of old towns, some of which were places of considerable size and importance. Thither the people resorted in ancient times from all sides, and in this Lejah or asylum they dwelt secure from the raids of lawless tribes, and bid defiance to the attacks of even regular and well-disciplined armies.

[1] Five Years in Damascus, pp. 281, 282.

XII.

EL MUSMEIH TO EDHRA' AND KŬNAWÂT.

Howling Jackals and Barking Dogs. — El Musmeih, Phæno. — Rock-cut Road. — Cisterns.—Roman Legions.—An Episcopal City.—Temple at el Musmeih.—Shell-shaped Roof.—Columns with Wreaths or Bands.—Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Verus. — Greek Inscription. — Trachonitis, el Lejah. — Governor's Palace and Bishop's Residence.—Ruins of Private Houses.—Influence of External Nature upon Human Character.—The Border of the Lejah.—Rocky Labyrinths.—Fountains and Streams.—The Egyptian Army driven out of the Lejah.—Regular Troops of no Avail in the Volcanic Clefts and Chasms of the Lejah.—Sha'ârah.—Tower, Temple, and Inscription.—Manufacture of Saltpetre.—The Outer and the Inner Lejah.—Oozy Black Mud.—Stream from Tibny.—Scarcity of Water.—"Deceitful Brooks" and Job's "Miserable Comforters."—The Guides of Ancient and Modern Caravans "Confounded and Ashamed."—Personal Experience in the Wilderness of Wandering.—Deserted Villages and Partially Cultivated Plain.—Es Sŭnamein, the Two Idols.—Mecca Pilgrims.—Aere.—Stone Walls, Doors, Windows, and Roofs.—Towers, Temples, and Inscriptions.—Fortuna, the Goddess of Luck.—Tell Kusweh.—Khŭbab.—Ox Ploughing and Taxation.—Manufacture of Lava Millstones.—A Century Old.—Boys' School.—Desire for Education.—Manners and Customs, Dress and Appearance of the People in the Lejah.—Interments in Open Pens of Lava Fragments.—Shŭkrah.—Muddy Causeway.—Melîhat Hazkîn.—Ruined and Deserted Towers.—Saints' Tomb.—Gray Wolf.—Tibny.—A French Monk.—A Mass of Prostrate Buildings.—Wheat Concealed in Cisterns.—Bedawîn Robbers.—Storehouses of Joseph in Egypt.—Luhf el Lejah.—Plain of the Haurân.—Ruins of Ancient Cities.—Ancient Fireproof Houses.—Houses Burned Down on Lebanon.—Healthy Climate and Extensive Prospects.—El Haurân.—En Nŭkrah, el Lejah, and el Jebel.—Dr. Eli Smith's List of Two Hundred and Thirty-nine Sites of Towns and Villages.—Moslems, Druses, and Christians.—Greeks and Greek Catholics.—Sites of Seventy-five Villages and Ancient Towns within and around the Lejah.—"Threescore Cities Fenced with High Walls."—"The Kingdom of Og in Bashan."—Approach to Edhra' through Lava Defiles and along a Rock-cut Road.—Site of Edhra'.—Exploits of the Hebrews in the Time of Moses.—M. Waddington.—Edrei.—Zorava.—Der'a.—The Conflict Between Og, King of Bashan, and the Hebrews.—Edhra' identical with the City mentioned by Moses.—Extensive Ruins.—Subterranean Residences.—Description of the Stone

Roofs and the Supporting Arches.—Ancient Architects.—Window-shutters and Doors made of Lava Slabs.—The Church of St. Elias.—Greek Inscriptions.—The Church of St. George Described by M. Waddington.—Quadrangular Structure Described by Burckhardt.—Square Tower.—Columns of Green Micaceous Marble.—Ruined Vaults and Prostrate Columns.—Excursion into the Lejah.—Air-bubbles of Hard Rock.—Masses of Lava, and Petrified Waves.—Shivered Hills and Funnel-shaped Pits.—Flocks of Sheep and Goats.—Bedawîn Shepherds Professional Robbers.—"All Thieves."—Scarcity of Pasture.—Deterioration of the Lejah.—No Wild Animals and but few Birds.—Reservoirs in Caverns.—Native Traditions.—Few Springs and no Never-failing Fountains.—Caverns mentioned by Josephus.—Subterranean Dwellings, Pools of Water and Corn in Granaries.—Herod the Great.—Robbers of Trachonitis and the Bedawîn of the Lejah.—Greek, Cufic, and Nabathean Inscriptions.—M. Waddington.—Harrân.—Blood Feuds.—Law of Revenge.—Burckhardt's Visit to Dâma.—Rock-cut Cisterns.—Encampment of Medlej Bedawîn.—Tents Concealed in the Crevices and Fissures of the Rocks.—Modern Villages and Ancient Sites.—Remarkable Preservation of Ruined Towns and Cities.—Pompeii.—Houses Constructed of Imperishable Lava.—Temples and Public Edifices in the Lejah erected before the Christian Era.—Ruins at Nejrân.—Church with Two Towers.—Blood-money.—Terebinth-oil used instead of Olive-oil.—Disappearance of the old Earthen Lamp.—Petroleum from Pennsylvania.—"The Smoking Flax and the Bruised Reed."—The Servant of the Lord.—Fire out of the Heel, and Ink out of the Mouth.—The Stream in Wady Kŭnawât.—Shŭhba Described by Dr. Porter.—A Roman City.—Streets and Gates, Temples, Baths, and Public Buildings.—Theatre at Shŭhba.—M. Waddington and the Count De Vogüé.—The Emperor Philip.—Philippopolis.—Shŭhba and the Shehâb Emîrs.—Nûr ed Dîn and Saladin.—The Crusaders.—The Monguls.—The Emîr Beshîr.—Muhammed Aly.—Civil Wars and the Massacres of 1860.—A Long Pedigree, from "the Beginning" to the Present Hour.—Temple at Suleim.—Neapolis.—Cavernous Cistern.—Ruins of an Old Town.—The Village School and Native Teacher.—Desire for Education.—Moments lengthened into Hours.—Proverbial Hospitality.—Græco-Roman Population East of the Jordan.—A Succession of Temples and Public Buildings.—More Greek Inscriptions than in all Syria and Palestine.—Cities of the Decapolis.—"Jesus went through the Borders of the Decapolis."—Roman Road.—Oak Woods.—Approach to Kŭnawât.—River of Kŭnawât.—Theatre in Wady Kŭnawât.—Outlook over the Plain of the Haurân to distant Hermon.—Nymphæum, or Public Bath.—Round Tower.—Cyclopean Walls.—Oldest Ruins of Kenath.—Main Street.—Houses with Sculptured Doors.—A Natural Fortification.—The City Wall.—Paved Area.—Es Serai, or Convent of Job.—Beautiful Door-way.—Sculptured Figures and Clusters of Grapes.—Colonnades.—Heathen Edifices and Christian Churches.—Large Vaulted Cisterns.—Roman Prostyle Temple.—Colossal Head in High-relief.—Heads of Baal and Ashtoreth.—American Palestine Exploration Society.—Worship of Ashtoreth.—Syria Dea.—Ashtoreth Karnaim.—Peripteral Temple.—Dedicated to Helios or the Sun.—Biblical History of Kenath.—Jair, Nobah, Gideon.—Josephus and Herod the Great.—Ptolemy and Pliny.—Eusebius and the Peutinger Table.—Kŭnawât the Biblical Kenath or Nobah.—M. Waddington.—Greek Inscriptions.—King Agrippa.—Statue of Herod the Great.—Si'a.—Streams at Kŭnawât.—No Water

even for Money. — The Population of the Haurân Increasing. — Primitive School and Venerable School-master. — Boards instead of Books. — Remarkable Zeal for Instruction.

September 18th.

NOTHING more formidable than the melancholy howl of jackals and the barking of the Bedawîns' dogs disturbed our slumbers last night, and while the servants are busy packing and the muleteers are loading their animals we will visit the ruins of this remarkable and once extensive city.

What was the name of this place in former times?

El Musmeih was called Phæno by the Greeks, and Phæna in the days of the Romans, and an inscription on the main entrance to the temple determines the important fact that the Lejah is the Trachonitis of the ancients. Phæna was, indeed, one of its chief towns, and that accounts for the size of the place as well as the character of its ruins, which spread over a space nearly three miles in circumference. It is situated at the northern end of the Lejah, and just within its rocky border, and the road leading to it from the plain was excavated in the hard lava.

Like all other cities in the Lejah, Phæna was entirely dependent on its cisterns for water, hence their number and large size. It appears to have been an important place in the time of the Romans, for we learn from the inscriptions that a part of the Third Gallic and of the Sixteenth Legions were at one time stationed here. During the early centuries of the Christian era Phæna was an episcopal city, and its temple was converted into a church. which subsequently was transformed into a mosk.

This temple at el Musmeih is a fine specimen of the architecture of that Greco-Roman period, and it is one of the best preserved ruins in this ancient "region of Argob." It stood facing the east, and in front of it was a large paved court, which appears to have had a colonnade on three sides of it. The fragments of those columns are scattered about in confusion, not even the pedestals being in situ. A flight of six stone steps lead up to the portico of the temple, which consisted of six Doric columns—three on either side of the main entrance; those on the right, or south, are the only ones still standing. The large and lofty central door, now almost entirely walled up, was without decoration, and the small side doors

had each a semicircular niche, finished at the top in the form of a shell, with four columns in front supporting a series of round receding arches and a projecting triangular roof.

The temple was, externally, nearly fifty feet wide, over seventy feet in length, and about forty feet high, and the walls are almost perfect, though they have been cracked and shaken by earthquakes. Within it is not quite forty-three feet square, having a large semicircular niche in the west wall opposite the main entrance, which is vaulted over by a shell-shaped roof of unusual size and beauty, and cut in the hard basaltic slabs. The roof, which has fallen, was made of the same kind of slabs, resting upon four arches supported by four Corinthian columns, still standing in the middle of the edifice. The columns are about thirty feet high, with corresponding pilasters in the side walls; their pedestals, ornamented with wreaths, are over three feet high, and the shafts about two feet below the capitals are also decorated with wreaths or bands.

This temple, according to an inscription on the lintel of the main entrance, was erected by a commander of the Third Gallic Legion, then stationed in this city, and during the reign of the emperors Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Verus, or between 161 and 169 A.D. This long inscription of forty lines on the left of the main entrance to the temple is addressed to the people of Phæna, one of the principal towns of Trachon, or Trachonitis, thus establishing the identity of the latter with the Lejah. There are other inscriptions upon the bases of the three columns, on the architrave, in the portico, and on the pedestals within the temple, but none of them are supposed to be of an earlier date than the first century of the Christian era.

About forty rods east of the temple is a confused mass of ruins belonging to a group of buildings, one of which was three stories high, and it may have been the governor's palace and afterwards the residence of the bishop of this diocese. Most of the private houses of Phæna are now in ruins, but there are several large structures in the southern part of the city which are still in a tolerable state of preservation, and from the top of one of them the outlook over this dreary wilderness of black lava is wholly unique and dismal in the extreme.



TEMPLE AT EL MUSMEIH—PHÆNA.

If external nature exercises a potent influence upon human character, no wonder that the inhabitants of Argob, Trachonitis, or el Lejah were a wild and lawless set. Certain it is that the reputation which the people of this region have always borne strikingly accords with its physical features.

It is high time we were on our journey. For the first hour and a half our course will be due west along the northern border of the Lejah to the site of an ancient place now called Sha'ârah, where the muleteers are to wait for us.

The country on the north and west sides of the Lejah, according to your account, is rather desolate and uninteresting.

My remarks applied only to the few miles immediately after we leave el Musmeih. We are now fairly entering upon the outskirts of this wonderful basaltic wilderness of the Lejah, and the border is as sharply outlined as though it were the ragged line of broken cliffs extending along a rocky shore. It will give sufficient occu-

pation to even a practised rider to guide his horse safely through these rocky labyrinths; conversation might even prove to be a distraction dangerous to life and limb, so I will merely say that there are several fountains between el Musmeih and Sha'ârah whose streams irrigate the fields on the neighboring plain cultivated by the inhabitants of that village.

More than forty years ago the entire Egyptian army, under Ibrahim Pasha, was driven out of the Lejah, with great slaughter, by the Druses. Their boast is that they had less than two thousand fighting men, while the army of Ibrahim Pasha amounted to forty thousand. The reason for that signal defeat is sufficiently obvious. Regular troops can do nothing amongst the clefts and chasms and intricate labyrinths of this volcanic Lejah against an enemy they cannot see, and where they are shot down hopelessly contending with foes they cannot dislodge.

That would certainly be their fate, especially if regular troops were decoyed into such a rough and rocky region as this through which we have been passing for the last half hour, entangled as it is with these impenetrable thorny thickets.

We are approaching Sha'ârah, which, as you see, is built on both sides of the valley that descends into the western plain. Burckhardt spent a night here, and his description of the place will answer very well for the village of to-day: "Sha'ârah is inhabited," he says, "by about one hundred Druse and Christian families. It was once a considerable city, half an hour from the cultivated plain, and surrounded by a most dreary, barren w'âr. It has several solidly built structures, now in ruins, and amongst others a tower that must have been about forty-five feet high. In the upper town is an ancient edifice [a temple] with arches, converted into a mosque."[1] Over the door is a Greek inscription, which he copied, and from which we learn that the temple was built about the same time as the one at Phæna, or el Musmeih. He found a saltpetre manufactory in the town, similar to those we passed at Sher'aya, on our way here from el Musmeih, and he gives a detailed description of the manufacture of saltpetre from the earth which was dug up from amongst the ruins of these ancient towns.

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., p. 114.

From Sha'ârah our route will lead southward along the western margin of the Lejah; and it is time to address ourselves to the rough road over its jagged and rocky spurs towards Khŭbab, where we take our lunch. The outer Lejah, however, is not so wild and inaccessible as the inner; the rocks are not so high, nor is the surface so uneven, and the patches of soil are larger, more frequent, and better fitted for cultivation and pasture.

I am continually reminded of the great difference between my former visit to this region and our present experience in the matter of rain-water. I cannot recall a more disagreeable ride than that from el Musmeih to Khŭbab. We kept along and over the rocky margin of the Lejah, and even then our animals frequently floundered in oozy, black mud, that seemed to have no bottom; then we encountered a little stream called Nahr 'Arrâm, coming from the vicinity of the village of Tibny, and flowing in a southerly direction, which is now quite dry; and before we reached Tell Kusweh we overtook some natives whose donkeys had actually stuck fast in the mud. Now the only trouble is to obtain water enough for ourselves and our thirsty animals.

Such dried-up streams suggested to Job, I suppose, one of his bitter rebukes of his false-hearted friends and "miserable comforters." In his anguish and disappointment, when he looked for sympathy and support from them and obtained only unkind reproof, he exclaimed, "My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away; which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid: what time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place. The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish."[1]

We shall see many such streams on our farther travels in this region, and may sometimes look for them as did "the troops [or caravans] of Tema," and be disappointed as were "the companies of Sheba" who "waited for them" and "were confounded because they had hoped" for water and "were ashamed" when "they came thither" and found none.[2] The words "confounded" and "ashamed" may refer to the feelings of the over-confident guides of those an-

[1] Job vi. 15–18. [2] Job vi. 19, 20.

cient caravans through the desert, who were expected to know where an adequate supply of water could be obtained.

When passing, many years ago, "through that great and terrible wilderness" of wandering, north of en Nŭkhl, the water-barrels were exhausted, but our Bedawîn sheikh assured us that we would find good water at the place where he was taking us to encamp.[1] On arriving there in the evening, however, there was very little water to be obtained, and that so brackish that we could not drink it. The sheikh was "confounded," and being sharply rebuked appeared to be "ashamed," and taking one of the barrels on his shoulder he set off in search of better water. He returned long after midnight without any, and he seemed to feel greatly mortified that his reputation as a reliable guide had been seriously impaired.

Although there is now no habitation of man to the east of our road, for the villages are all deserted and desolate between el Musmeih and Khŭbab, still we are favored with prospects of great beauty and vast extent over the rich and partially cultivated plain of the Haurân and the district of el Jeidûr westward, and northward as far as to the majestic heights of Mount Hermon.

Is there no place of historical importance out on the plain?

South-west of el Musmeih and about ten miles distant from it is the large Moslem village of es Sŭnamein, or the Two Idols. It is on the Haj road from Damascus to Mecca, and there the pilgrims sometimes spend one of the first nights of their arduous journey. The ruins in the village are of considerable interest, and it is supposed to have derived its present name from two figures cut on a basaltic stone near the gate; but Muhammedan iconoclasts have rendered them almost unrecognizable. We learn from a Greek inscription that the ancient name of the place was Aere, probably identical with a station on the Roman road between Damascus and Nowa or Neve. Some of the houses have massive stone walls, stone doors and window-shutters, and stone roofs.

In and about that village there are also several square towers, large buildings, and the remains of two temples, one of which, built of limestone and in the Corinthian style of architecture, was once used as a church. The same Greek inscription informs us that one

[1] Deut. i. 19.

of those temples, built about the third century of our era, was dedicated to Fortuna, or Tyche, the goddess of luck or chance.

Can we not stop and lunch here just as well as anywhere else on this treeless plain, for I am becoming both weary and hungry?

Just as you please. Our thoughtful cook has brought a bottle of water from the fountain near Tell Kusweh, which is much better than any we shall find in the village of Khŭbab.

Edhra', where we are to spend the night, is about four hours from Khŭbab, and as we are to pass through the latter place and reach the former in time to examine the ruins there before dark, we must not linger here over our lunch.

The sheikh of Khŭbab is a Druse, although it is a Christian village and inhabited by about one hundred families of Greek Catholics. It is situated on a rocky spur of the Lejah, terminating in two low tells, and access to it from the plain is not difficult. Agriculture is the principal occupation of the people, who are taxed for two hundred feddân, implying that they possess a portion of the plain around and west of them which it would require two hundred yoke of oxen to cultivate.

There is also a special industry carried on at this place, as well as in some other villages in this region. Here the finishing touches are put to the millstones which have been quarried out of the basaltic rock of the Lejah for the past ages. "The stones are cut horizontally out of the rocks, leaving holes four or five feet in depth and as many in circumference; fifty or sixty of these excavations are often met with in the circumference of a mile," and, as Burckhardt remarks, "the stones are exported over the greater part of Syria as far as Aleppo and Jerusalem. They vary in price according to their size, and are preferred to all others on account of the hardness of the stone."[1]

On my previous visit to Khŭbab, Sheikh Diâb, the head of the village, told me that his people came there from Sûlkhad one hundred and five years before, at which time the place was deserted. Consequently the houses are almost all comparatively modern, though built upon and out of ancient edifices. Its original name appears to have been Habila, and it must have been a considerable

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., pp. 57, 113.

town, though, like all the rest in the Lejah, having no permanent fountain, it is sadly destitute of good water.

The people are rather boisterous and rude in their behavior, but they do not seem to be ill-natured.

There is a boys' school in the village, and when I was here before, the pupils were marched down to our camp early Monday morning, with banners flying and a great clapping of hands for music. Arranged in front of the tent, one of the boys stepped out of the ranks and made a speech, all flower and compliment, which the teacher had no doubt prepared for the occasion. That over, they burst forth into vociferous applause and then marched back to their school-room. That was more than I expected to see in the Lejah, and affords reliable evidence that a desire for education and improvement is slowly penetrating into the darkest parts of this dark region. Many of the people were eager to procure books, and a colporteur, I was told, had actually sold some in this village.

In manners and customs, dress and appearance, very little progress has yet been made by the people in this region towards a higher civilization. The women generally wear the long, loose shirt of blue cotton cloth almost universal in the Haurân for both sexes; they go barefoot to the stagnant pool and bring home large buckets of cream-colored water, which is the only kind there is here. No doubt it will lose some of its color in a few days, but none of its offensive odor and other deleterious qualities.

The people of Khŭbab treat their dead in a most shocking manner. On a bare lava ridge, a short distance to the east of the village, I found a number of small open pens about three feet high, made by piling up loose lava fragments. Within those pens the corpse is placed, without any interment or other covering whatever. There is not a handful of earth in the immediate neighborhood, and that is their excuse for not burying the bodies of the dead; but surely they might cover them with stones. I was informed that within a year the bodies become perfectly dry, and the bones are then collected and placed in a large and special pen prepared for their reception. I saw two of those pens quite full of such bones—a most revolting spectacle—the like of which I had never seen elsewhere nor even heard of before.

There is nothing to detain us here, so, leaving Khŭbab, we will continue our journey along the road to Edhra', which at this season of the year is passably good. In April I found deep mud in many places, and near the village of esh Shŭkrah the road led through a wide pond on a broken causeway made of loose stones, over which our horses floundered in great perplexity.

The last time I was at Khŭbab I walked out in the evening to examine a ruin called Melîhat Hazkîn, a mass of ancient buildings with heavy stone doors still hanging on their hinges, Roman arches, and slab roofs. I went into a room and shut the door, but was rather puzzled to open it again, it moved so heavily on its stone hinges. With some tribulation I copied a Greek inscription, supposing that M. Waddington had missed it, but upon careful examination of his learned work found that it had not escaped his thorough and indefatigable search.

Hazkîn is quite within the Lejah, and the outlook from the top of the ruins was dreary and desolate in the extreme. A number of ruined towers long since deserted were visible in various parts of that melancholy volcanic wilderness, but not a human being was anywhere to be seen. There is a Muzâr, or saints' tomb, a little to the north-west of the ruins, which is still frequented by the Bedawîn. Old rags and tattered flags hung about it and fluttered sadly in the evening breeze, and the only living creature near was a large gray wolf, who fled on my approach and soon disappeared among the black lava rocks of the surrounding region.

There seems to be a great gathering of people at that village which we see yonder on our right, situated on that low hill at the very margin of the plain. What has brought them there?

They come from the surrounding country, probably to celebrate the feast-day of one of their numerous saints. The village is called Tibny, and the inhabitants are Greek Catholics, like those of Khŭbab. I was surprised to find a monk stationed there who spoke French fluently. He was ambitious to display his local knowledge, and gave us a detailed account of the ancient history of the place. The oldest ruins seen there are on the south of the village, and consist of a confused mass of entirely prostrate buildings.

In one place a number of the villagers were drawing up wheat

out of a deep cistern which they had uncovered in the middle of a large dunghill—the last place where a stranger would expect to find such "hid treasure;" but Bedawîn robbers sometimes torture the owners until they reveal the cisterns in which the grain is concealed. The wheat was perfectly free from mould or injury of any kind resulting from its long confinement in that subterranean granary. The monk assured me that if those cisterns were hermetically sealed, the grain in them would remain for many years without being damaged. It is an interesting fact that the wheat of this country can thus be kept from year to year; and some such custom must have prevailed in very ancient times, for we know that Joseph preserved his stores in Egypt during "the seven years of famine" for at least that length of time.[1]

We are just extricating ourselves from this lava labyrinth, and for most of the way we shall skirt the western margin of the Lejah southward to Edhra'. The surrounding plain is called Luhf el Lejah. Lihâf is the singular for the thick cotton quilt under which the natives sleep, luhf being the plural, and the application of that term to the narrow border of the Lejah may express the meaning that the great plain of the Haurân, on the south and west, spreads up to and covers the feet of the rocky lava spurs which stretch down into it in various places and on all sides. Just within the Lejah, and above and beyond the Luhf, are found nearly all the ruins of ancient cities; and whatever inhabitants now occupy them cultivate the neighboring parts of the plain.

I suppose that the selection of those sites was originally made for the purpose of protection against robbers, who appear to have infested this region in all past ages, as they do at the present time. The houses were all roofed with lava slabs, and probably one reason for using lava instead of wooden beams, even where there were forests at no great distance, may have been to render the dwellings fire-proof. I have seen the houses in the southern half of Lebanon burned down at least three times within the last forty years. As they are all built of stone, had they been roofed with stone slabs like these of the Lejah instead of wood, it could not have been possible to burn them; and since this district of old Argob has always

[1] Gen. xli. 46–48, 53–57.

been exposed, even more than Lebanon, to sudden invasions and internal convulsions, habitations that could not be set on fire proved to be necessary both for protection and defence. Of course those stone-roofed rooms are also the most durable, and much cooler during the summer than those roofed with wood—an important consideration in a region like this of the Lejah.

Though so little elevated above the surrounding country, the inhabitants of the Lejah are evidently favored with a healthy climate, and they certainly enjoy prospects of great variety and of almost boundless extent.

Below them is the famed Haurân, most of it as level as the sea, and in the spring it is covered with golden harvests ripening for the sickle, while far away to the north-west and north tower the snow-clad heights of Hermon and the rugged ridges of Ante-Lebanon. Dr. Eli Smith says that the province of el Haurân "is regarded by the natives as consisting of three parts, called en Nŭkrah, el Lejah, and el Jebel," and he gives a list of two hundred and thirty-nine sites of towns and villages in it. Many, it is true, are marked as deserted, but a large and ever-increasing number are occupied by a mixed population of Moslems and Christians, or Druses and Christians, the latter chiefly of the Greek and Greek Catholic sects, and all residing together in peace.

In the Luhf which surround the Lejah on the north, east, south, and west there are thirty-seven names on Dr. Smith's list, and there were many others whose names he did not get; while within the Lejah itself he gives twenty-two names of sites, and recent research has brought to light not a few others. There are, therefore, within and around the Lejah, more than seventy-five villages and sites of ancient towns.

I suppose that much of the Lejah, the ancient "region of Argob," and all the country west of it—"the kingdom of Og, in Bashan"—was included in the conquest by the Hebrews, and that therefore the statement that they "took threescore cities fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; besides unwalled towns a great many" is neither improbable nor exaggerated.[1] Such dry lists of names like those given by Dr. Smith are thus found to add impor-

[1] Deut. iii. 4, 5.

tant confirmation to some of the accounts contained in the oldest portions of the sacred Scriptures regarding this land.

We may at least conclude that if modern research had shown that "the kingdom of Og in Bashan" was a mere barren waste, incapable of sustaining any considerable population, we should be not a little perplexed with some parts of Biblical history; but no such embarrassments can arise in regard to the narratives, for we have before and around us this very region thickly studded with sites apparently as old as the history requires, and certainly quite as numerous.

Edhra', September 18th. Evening.

Our ride into this ancient city from the plain, along the rock-cut road and through jagged fissures, was not a little nervous, and quite dangerous to both horse and rider. The lava seems to have run and spread like slag from a furnace, and in many places it is as hard as adamant and as smooth as glass.

Though the site of Edhra' upon its rocky promontory is not elevated more than fifty or sixty feet above the plain on the west and south, yet it is surrounded on all sides for nearly two miles by a wilderness of fractured lava, which would render the approach of an enemy almost impossible.

Your account of the defeat of Ibrahim Pasha's army amongst the rock labyrinths of the Lejah brought to mind the exploits of the Hebrews in the time of Moses, and I seemed to get an entirely new idea of the valor of those mighty warriors who could in a single campaign overrun this whole region and take "all the cities of the plain, and all Gilead and all Bashan, unto Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan."[1]

Perhaps you are not aware that M. Waddington and others assert that this is not the Edrei mentioned by Moses; and from an inscription found here he proves to his entire satisfaction that its Græco-Roman name was Zorava. That evidence, however, is not decisive. No one will maintain, I suppose, that Zorava was the original name of this place; and the Greeks might have changed Edrei, the ancient Hebrew name, into Zorava to distinguish it from another town with a similar name, supposed to be identical with

[1] Deut. iii. 8–10.

Der'a, about twenty miles north-west of el Busrah or Bozrah, and which M. Waddington maintains is the Biblical Edrei.

The account of the Hebrew conquest of this part of Og's dominions seems to imply that the final battle took place near the border of his territory. The record is in these words: "And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he, and all his people, to the battle at Edrei."[1] As the Kingdom of Og appears to have extended to the Lejah, and probably included this entire district, it is natural to suppose that he would make his final stand somewhere along its almost impregnable frontier. No more formidable position could be desired than this at Edhra', and the present Arabic name is much nearer the Hebrew than Der'a, the rival claimant, which appears also to be too far west to have been the scene of the complete and disastrous overthrow of the king of Bashan.

The Lejah is generally admitted to be the Argob of the Bible, and the term Argob—stony—pre-eminently applies to it, while it does not at all describe the region round about Der'a. I am, therefore, inclined to adhere to the opinion that the conflict between Og, king of Bashan, and the Hebrews took place near the border of "the region of Argob," the Trachonitis of the Greeks and Romans, the Lejah of the Arabs; and, accordingly, here at Edhra' we find the remains of an ancient city in a locality which meets the requirements of the Biblical narrative, and still bearing a name which may be regarded as identical with that mentioned by Moses.[2]

The existing ruins are nearly four miles in circumference, and although many of the houses and other edifices in their present condition are of an age comparatively modern, yet they were erected on foundations and out of materials far more ancient. Most of the present inhabitants reside in the vaults of old structures which may fairly be said to be underground, so great is the accumulation above them of the débris of ruined buildings. To reach them one has to descend as into subterranean courts and caverns.

Sheikh Ibrahim, the Christian ruler of Edhra', has been specially polite, and under his guidance we have been able to examine the principal ruins, and also to enter some of the private houses.

[1] Numb. xxi. 33–35.

[2] Deut. iii. 1–7.

And more wretched human habitations we have rarely seen in this country. Descending down broken steps encumbered with rubbish, we groped our way into rooms black as midnight and without windows for either light or air. Waiting until our optical powers had become adjusted to the glimmering of daylight from the low door, we took a survey of those subterranean abodes. In almost every instance they are simply ancient vaults, and the low black roof was composed of volcanic slabs, one end of which rests on corbels, or slight projections from the walls on either side, and the other upon an arch which divides the room longitudinally in the middle. The slabs have been trimmed so as to fit closely, and are about six inches thick, eighteen inches broad, and from six to eight feet long. Allowing one foot for the projections from each wall, and two feet for the thickness of the central supporting arch, the width of the apartment would be nearly twenty feet. Of course the rooms could be made of any desired length and breadth by using longer slabs and increasing the number of supporting arches. They are, however, generally square, and the stone roof is very low.

That description applies, with very little modification, to all the buildings in this whole region. Those ancient architects apparently had but one model, and, whether from design or from necessity, they erected edifices that were absolutely fire-proof. There was nothing to burn. The walls, the roofs, and the very window-shutters and doors were made of slabs of lava, and whether single or double leaved, they turned on pivots and in sockets cut out of the stones themselves. Most of the doors were low and rude, though I have seen some that are skilfully carved with elaborate designs in panel-work, and high enough for any of "the giants" of Bashan to enter without unnecessary abasement and humiliation.

Amongst the ruins the most remarkable appear to be those of the so-called churches in the south-eastern and north-western part of the town. But the structure which attracted my attention the most is near the tower, in the middle of the present village.

The roof of Mâr Elyâs as it is called, or the Church of St. Elias, has fallen, and only the walls remain standing. The Greek priest took us down about ten feet into the court of that roofless sanctuary, where they still worship, and was careful to point out the Greek

inscriptions which even now are quite legible. From the one over the entrance we learn that the church was erected during the sixth century of the Christian era.

Mâr Jirjis, the church of St. George, or el Khŭdr, as the Moslems call that renowned saint in the north-western part of the town, was originally a temple, and subsequently converted into a church, but apparently never used as a mosk. M. Waddington says of it that, "like the cathedral of Bozrah, which was built at the same epoch [about A.D. 510-512], it has the form of an octagon inscribed in a square plan. Eight columns bound by arches support the cupola, which is surrounded on the outside by an open gallery. In the four corners of the church there are small chapels, and on one side a large chapel projected on the square, and here is the tomb of St. George, an object of veneration to both Christians and Mohammedans, Druses and Bedawîn."

The quadrangular structure near the centre of the village was probably a public building converted into a church and subsequently used as a mosk, "but it has long since been abandoned." Burckhardt correctly describes it as "having two vaulted colonnades at the northern and southern ends, each consisting of a double row of five columns. In the middle of the area stood a parallel double range of columns of a larger size, forming a colonnade across the middle of the building; the columns are of the Doric order, and about sixteen feet high. Over the entrance are three inscribed tablets, only one of which, built upside down in the wall, is legible. Adjoining this building stands a square tower, about fifty feet high; its base is somewhat broader than its top. I frequently saw similar structures in the villages [of the Lejah and of the Haurân]; they all have windows near the summit; in some there is one window on each side, in others there are two, as in this at Edhra'. They have generally several stories of vaulted chambers, with a staircase to ascend into them."[1]

I noticed that some of the columns in that quadrangular structure were of a green micaceous marble, the only specimens of the kind I have seen in this region. There is a large open area on the east of that edifice, like that of a modern khân, with prostrate col-

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., pp. 61, 62.

umns in the middle of the court-yard, and others still supporting the vaulted roofs of former chambers. It appears to have been repaired at one time by the Saracens.

Our day's work has left me thoroughly wearied with ruins, and as we contemplate an early start and another long ride to-morrow, we had better retire to rest.

Edhra', September 19th.

To extricate our caravan from the rocky wilderness around Edhra', and reach Luhf el Lejah, half an hour to the south, is the first thing to be done this morning, after which the road will be comparatively level and pleasant to travel upon.

At what place do we expect to encamp to-night?

Kŭnawât, near the north-western base of Jebel Haurân, and it will take seven or eight hours to get there.

I regret that we have not penetrated farther into a region so peculiar and so celebrated from remote antiquity as the Lejah.

Some years ago our party, while in Edhra', had a strong desire to explore it, and finding a Bedawîn in the place who offered to guide us through the Lejah to Harrân, a village about eight miles to the north-east of Edhra', we gladly availed ourselves of his services and of the opportunity to see more of the interior of that wonderful district. As there is nothing along our present route to require special notice, I will give you an account of that ride. But how am I to describe a region totally unlike any other with which to compare it? I could not follow that winding way again, for our caravan made no impression upon the hard lava rock, and we left no trace of our passage behind us. And though the distance between the two places is not very great, it took us four and a half hours to reach Harrân. You know that the Lejah is entirely volcanic, and that it nowhere rises higher than a hundred feet above the surrounding plain of the Haurân. But that gives no idea of the real nature of that extraordinary district.

Soon after leaving Edhra' I noticed that we were riding over smooth lava rock resembling an unbroken floor, considerably elevated in the middle, as though the molten mass beneath the outer crust had swelled it up like an air-bubble, but without cracking or bursting the surface. Those swellings or protuberances were of

frequent occurrence, extending for considerable distances, and forming a surface as hard as iron, and giving forth a sharp metallic sound when struck. Then there were places where those air-bubbles had apparently burst open, and ragged masses of lava were scattered about in utter confusion. In some parts the hard crust had been elevated into long rolling waves, extending at a right angle to our course. Some of those petrified waves had not burst; others were broken and shattered and tossed about in a manner wholly indescribable. Over and amongst those adamantine air-bubbles and confused masses of broken lava our horses had to pick their way as best they could.

Burckhardt penetrated farther into the interior of the Lejah, and he says that "the rocks are in many places cleft asunder, so that the whole hill appears shivered and in the act of falling down; the layers are generally horizontal, from six to eight feet or more in thickness, sometimes covering the hills, and inclining to their curve, as appears from the fissures, which often traverse the rock from top to bottom."[1] We also passed during our ride that day numerous funnel-shaped pits, suggesting the idea that they were probably air-holes for the mass of molten lava once seething below. Some of those pits are now walled around with loose fragments of lava, evidently to prevent the flocks from falling into them, and others have been partially filled up, apparently for the same reason. Strange as it may seem, yet it is a fact that the Bedawîn of the Lejah have numerous flocks of both sheep and goats in that dreary volcanic region, apparently destitute of both water and pasture.

As we advanced into the interior, shepherds started up in the most unexpected places and rebuked our guide roughly for bringing "Franks" through their country. They, however, did not molest us, though it was evident that without our guide we would have been surrounded and plundered, if nothing worse. The number of those shepherds was quite surprising, and the sudden manner in which they appeared and again disappeared amongst the clefts of lava seemed incomprehensible. Our guide, however, led the way at the head of the caravan, singing with stentorian voice some warlike ditty quite unintelligible to us; but I suspect that he adopted

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., p. 112.

that method to inform the people of his tribe that we were persons whom they must not molest. However that may be, I noticed that some sinister-looking Bedawîn who seemed to be approaching us with hostile intent turned aside and disappeared as soon as they came within hearing of the words of his song.

How do those Bedawîn live, and where do they find pasture for their numerous flocks of sheep and goats?

An incident in the visit of Dr. Porter to Kŭnawât will sufficiently answer your first question. "In the evening," he says, "all went away except one, whom I recognized as having been amongst those who were lurking around us at Deir es Sumeid. 'What brought you to the Deir when you saw us there?' I asked him. 'To strip you,' he coolly replied. 'And why did you not do it?' 'Because Mahmûd [the Druse guide] was with you.' 'But why would you plunder us?—we are strangers and not your enemies.' 'It is our custom.' 'And do you strip all strangers?' 'Yes, all we can get hold of.' 'And if they resist, or are too strong for you?' 'In the former case we shoot them from behind trees, and in the latter we run.' 'How do the people of your tribe live?—do they sow or feed flocks?' 'We are not fellahîn [farmers], thank God!' he said, with dignity. 'We keep goats and sheep, hunt partridges and gazelles, and steal!' 'Are you all thieves?' 'Yes, all!' These answers were given with the greatest composure and quite as a matter of course."[1]

As to where their flocks find pasture, that is a question easier asked than answered. For many miles along the road there was neither grass, bush, nor tree: nothing but lava—bare, hard, black lava; but there must have been places where bushes and herbage grew, though at some distance from our track. Even as we approached Harrân I saw but little which either man or beast could eat. I think the Lejah has deteriorated in some respects since Burckhardt saw it. He mentions five small tribes of Bedawîn who then wandered about in it, and had from fifty to one hundred and twenty tents each. They also possessed large flocks of goats, "which easily find pasture amongst the rocks," some sheep and cows, a few horses, and many camels.[2]

[1] Five Years in Damascus, pp. 207, 208.

[2] Travels in Syria, etc., pp. 111, 112.

We saw no goats or camels, though there were many sheep; nor did we see any wild animals and but few birds. Near Harrân there were some partridges, but so wild and wary that we could not get within shot of them. The flocks, their owners, and their families must be supplied with water, without which they could not live, and hence it is reasonable to suppose that there are reservoirs in caverns well known to the shepherds. But we need not credit some of the traditions and marvels related by the surrounding villagers. One man assured me that the Bedawîn could pass quite through under the Lejah from end to end along subterraneous passages without coming to the surface or being seen at all.

I made frequent inquiries both of our guide and the people of Harrân in regard to those caverns of which Josephus and some ancient writers about this region give such strange accounts. From the guide I could learn nothing, but the sheikh at Harrân said there were vast caverns known to the Bedawîn, in some of which there were large reservoirs of water. That is at least probable, for in all our ride there was not a drop of water to be found, and it is said that there are but few springs and no never-failing fountains in the inner Lejah. The description which Josephus gives of the "doings of the Trachonites" and their mode of life is quite interesting.

He says that "it was not an easy thing to restrain them, since this way of robbery had been their usual practice, and they had no other way to get their living, because they had neither any city of their own nor lands in their possession, but only some receptacles and dens in the earth, and there they and their cattle lived in common together. However, they had made contrivances to get pools of water, and laid up corn in granaries for themselves, and were able to make great resistance by issuing out on the sudden against any that attacked them; for the entrances of their caves were narrow, in which but one could come in at a time, and the places within incredibly large and made very wide; but the ground over their habitations was not very high, but rather on a plain, while the rocks are altogether hard and difficult to be entered upon unless any one gets into the plain road by the guidance of another, for these roads are not straight, but have several revolutions. But when Herod [the Great] had received this grant from Cæsar, and was come into this

country, he procured skilful guides, and put a stop to their wicked robberies, and procured peace and quietness to the neighboring people," including those of Damascus.[1]

According to that description both the Lejah and its present Bedawîn inhabitants correspond almost exactly with the oldest traditions regarding this region and the character of its people.

Our object in going to Harrân was to see the Lejah itself rather than the ruins of old cities with which it abounds. Yet some inscriptions in Harrân are regarded with interest, and M. Waddington has an extended critique concerning them. There are several in Greek and one in Cufic, the latter M. Waddington considers the oldest Arabic inscription he found in this country. A Nabathean inscription is also said to be there which, however, I did not see, and have some doubts as to its existence.

Harrân occupies a conspicuous position on the summit of a ridge not far from the south-eastern boundary of the Lejah, and when we came in sight of it our Bedawîn guide refused to go any farther, because there was a blood feud between his tribe and the Druses of that village; and though he himself was not the cause of the feud, yet, he said, they would kill him if they could catch him. The ancient law of revenge is still in full force amongst these poor fragments of by-gone races. We gave him his wages, and he quickly disappeared in the lava wilderness through which he had safely guided us for the last four hours from Edhra'.

The people of Harrân told us that in order to see the real Lejah we should visit the region around Dâma, a place a few miles north of their village. Burckhardt passed that way. He travelled as a native, with natives for his guides, lived with them, and did as they did; and hence he could penetrate into places where such caravans as ours could not venture. He procured two Druse guides at Khŭbab, and went from there to Dâma, and thence through the centre of the Lejah to el Musmeih. The distance from Khŭbab to Dâma was nearly four hours—about the same as from Edhra'—the road becoming more difficult as he approached Dâma, the country more barren and dismal, the rocks higher, and the pasturing places less frequent.

[1] Ant. xv. 10, 1.

"It appears strange," he says, "that a city should have been built by any people in a spot where there is neither water nor arable ground, and nothing but a little grass amidst the stones." And yet he estimated the number of houses at three hundred, and most of them were still in good preservation. He mentions one large building whose gate was ornamented with sculptured vine-leaves and grapes, like those we shall see this evening at Kŭnawât. "Every house appears to have had its cistern; there are many also in the immediate vicinity of the town; they are formed by excavations in the rock, the surface of which is supported by props of loose stones. Some of them are arched and have narrow canals to conduct the water into them from the higher ground."[1] When Dr. Eli Smith travelled through the Haurân in 1834, Dâma "was considered the capital of the entire Lejah."

Passing on from Dâma, Burckhardt and his guides saw "another ruined place, smaller than the former, and situated in a most dreary part of the Lejah, near which we found, after a good deal of search, an encampment of Bedawîn Arabs of the Medlej tribe, where we passed the night. These Arabs being of a doubtful character, and rendered independent by the very difficult access of their rocky abode, we did not think it prudent to tell them that I had come to look at their country; they were told, therefore, that I was a manufacturer of gunpowder in search of saltpetre. The tent in which we slept was remarkably large, although it could not easily be perceived amidst the labyrinth of rocks where it was pitched."[2]

That accords well with the description given to me by a Druse sheikh of Beit Tulhûk, on Lebanon, of their hiding-place in the neighborhood of Dâma, when the Egyptian army made that disastrous attempt to penetrate into the Lejah. The fissures and crevices in the rocks were so narrow, deep, and winding that their encampment could not be seen until one was directly above it; and in many places the bushes clinging to the sides of the crevices so concealed their tents that they could not be seen at all from above. Though that sheikh was there for several weeks, he never ventured outside of the camp without a guide, and never dared wander out of sight for fear that he would not be able to find his way back.

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., pp. 110, 111.

[2] Travels in Syria, etc., p. 111.

Burckhardt says that he and his guides found their "way with great difficulty out of the labyrinth of rocks which form the inner Lejah, and through which the Arabs alone have the clue."[1]

We have passed within sight of several villages which appear to occupy the sites of ancient cities.

The most conspicuous of those along our route have been Busr el Harîry, Ta'ârah, and Kîrâtah, which we have just passed, half concealed among the rocks within the Lejah, and several others situated on the plain of el Haurân, the most important of which is ed Dûr, some distance to the south. But the whole region east and south of us is dotted with old sites, and the former names of many ancient places have been recovered by the aid of Greek inscriptions found among their ruins.

The remarkable preservation of the remains of such towns and cities is certainly very surprising. The houses are not buried under mounds and hills of volcanic ashes, like those which concealed and saved from destruction the private dwellings and public edifices of Pompeii, but they have been exposed during long centuries to the rain and frost and snows of winter, and the blazing sun in summer, and yet they are still in such a condition that but few repairs are necessary to render them habitable.

The explanation is, that all the dwellings and larger edifices in this region were constructed entirely of stone—gate-ways, walls, doors, windows, stairs, and roofs were all made of the imperishable doleritic lava, hard as adamant. They have never been overwhelmed by volcanic eruption, and only partially demolished by the shock of destructive earthquakes.

I suppose that the temples, theatres, and other public buildings in those towns and cities of the Lejah must have been erected during the time of the Romans, and before Christianity had obtained any controlling influence in this part of the country?

No doubt; and some of them may date back farther than the commencement of our era. As to the sites which they now occupy, many of them may be essentially the same as those upon which the threescore cities mentioned in Deuteronomy were built. But let us return to our interrupted description. We went from Harrân to

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., p. 112.

Nejrân, a place about two and a half hours to the south-east of it. Nejrân is a much larger village than Harrân, and it is inhabited by Druses and Christians of the Greek Catholic sect. Much of the surrounding country is cultivated, and it may be regarded as near the extreme southern border of the Lejah.

Nejrân presents an imposing appearance, due to its position on the crest of the rocky ridge upon which it is built, but there is neither temple, theatre, nor other public edifice of importance in it, and its ancient name has not yet been ascertained. The ruins spread over a rocky surface nearly two miles in circumference, and some of the old houses are large and in a fair state of preservation. One of them has two stories, with wings on either side of the court, and there are numerous rooms on both stories. It is occupied by one of the leading Druse families in the Lejah. There are also the remains of a church, which appears to have been subsequently used as a mosk. It had two towers, and upon the walls of the church are some Greek inscriptions, one of which bears the Bostrian date 458, equivalent to the year 564 of our era.

Although the people of Harrân were profuse in their offers of service, we found it difficult to procure a guide to Nejrân. At last a young sheikh declared he would go himself, and arming to the teeth, he mounted his horse and we set off; but he was evidently not at his ease, and as soon as we came in sight of Nejrân he told us he could go no farther. "Why?" "Because there is a blood feud between that village and ours, and if I entered Nejrân not even you could save my life. One of our people unfortunately killed a man of Harrân, and we have not yet been able to settle the matter by paying the exorbitant sum demanded from us as blood-money, and until that is paid any one of our village may be murdered in retaliation;" and turning his horse homeward, he was soon out of sight. That was another striking illustration of the disorganized state of society in this region, and the stringency of the law of blood revenge, even down to the present time.

The Lejah appears to have had more trees at the time of Burckhardt's visit than at present—different varieties of oak, hawthorn, and other trees. He mentions the Butm, which, he says, "is the bitter-almond, from the fruit of which an oil is extracted used by the

people of the country to anoint their temples and forehead as a cure for colds; its branches are in great demand for pipe-stems."[1] The Butm is the terebinth, and near Harrân there are many of those trees, but of a stunted growth. I examined an ancient rock-cut oil-press below the village, where the berries were ground to a pulp in a stone trough or basin, and the oil expressed by a beam-press.

Butm-oil is used in that part of the country for lighting lamps instead of olive-oil, but ere long both will be superseded throughout this land by the cheaper and more brilliant petroleum imported from America, and the old earthen lamp, with its dripping wick and greasy stand, will be banished even from the homes of the poor. Thus another very Biblical household article will disappear forever from the Holy Land, and the humble habitations of the fellahîn in the Lejah and on Jebel Haurân, in the ancient kingdom of Bashan, will be illuminated by "oil out of the flinty rock," procured from the modern wells of Pennsylvania.

If your forecast of the near future in regard to that matter be correct, then the traveller in this country will no longer see "the smoking flax" mentioned by the prophet Isaiah which the Servant of the Lord would not quench.[2]

Not if by "the flax" the wick in the serâj or common earthen lamp of the East was intended. That, of course, will disappear along with the lamp itself.

Have you ever noticed the conditions which appear to be required by the language of the prophet?

When I first travelled about in Palestine and mingled freely with the people, I witnessed them every night. The ancient clay lamp was then universally used by the peasants. The wick was generally made of a twisted strand of flax or cotton thread, and was immersed in olive-oil in the shallow cup of the lamp. When the oil was nearly consumed, the lamp burned dimly, and instead of giving out a cheerful light it emitted a very offensive smoke. If the oil in the lamp was not replenished, "the smoking flax" would soon be quenched and the room left in utter darkness.

Isaiah seems to imply that this was sometimes done purposely.

And so it is now. I have seen the housewife thus "quench" the

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., p. 112.

[2] Isa. xlii. 3.

spent "flax," throw it away as no longer worth anything, and put a new wick in the lamp. The "Servant" of the Lord would not act thus. He would replenish the lamp with oil, trim the wick, and cause "the dimly burning" flame to spring up with fresh life and brightness. That too I have often seen done in the habitations of the fellahîn. The moral significance of that act is perfectly obvious, and it was intended to carry comfort and encouragement to the poor, the weak, and the despairing, whose light and hope were ready to die—a beautiful prophecy of Him who came into our world of sin and sorrow to help the helpless, to lift up the fallen, and save the lost. Though the earthen lamp, with its "dimly burning smoking flax," may be quenched and disappear from this land forever, the lesson taught by it will remain unchanged for all time.

The same comforting prophecy and promise are also taught by the "bruised reed," and there appears to be no danger that it will ever cease to exist in this country.[1] The banks of every brook and irrigating canal are fringed with them, and we have seen thousands of bruised reeds trampled underfoot and broken by man and beast, cattle and heedless flocks; nor does any one think it worth while apparently to lift them from the ground and help them to regain and maintain their upright position.

Even that is sometimes done, although the bruised reeds are generally left by man to be utterly broken and to fall away and perish. Not so, however, does the compassionate Servant of the Lord; and the broken reed was well chosen by the prophet to illustrate the infinite condescension and kindness of Him who healed the sick, cleansed the leper, and befriended the fallen and the outcast. But these are only a few of the changes in the near future of this country that will obliterate many things familiar to the readers of the Bible. Schools, books, newspapers, manufactures and machinery, steam and the telegraph, are slowly yet certainly penetrating every part of this land, and diffusing new ideas and customs amongst the people. The younger generation even now make merry over the simplicity and ignorance of their parents, which half a century ago sometimes manifested itself in a most laughable manner.

I was once travelling north of Tripoli, and having occasion to

[1] Isa. xlii. 3.

light a match, struck it against the heel of my boot. At sight of the blaze the crowd around me set up a loud shout, calling their friends to come and see a man who could draw fire out of his heel! On another occasion Dr. De Forest, while writing in his note-book, frequently applied the pencil to his tongue. The crowd, after watching the operation for some time, exclaimed, "See! see! This Frank carries his inkstand in his mouth!" You will not meet with similar examples of ignorance at present. All now know the use of percussion-caps, which used to astonish them when I came to this country, and you will now rarely find the old matchlock even in the hands of the Bedawîn. Nor in this very region of Jebel Haurân—the stronghold of the Druses—does one see nowadays a horned princess or a grandly beturbaned sheikh.

It is quite evident that many things ancient and Biblical, once so common in this country, are fast passing away, and this renders it the more interesting to traverse the land before they fade entirely out of sight and vanish forever.

No doubt that is true, and yet all that is of real importance will always remain stable as the everlasting hills or the ordinances of heaven and earth which cannot be changed. But this is a subject which we can better discuss on some future occasion and under more convenient circumstances. Let us now give some attention to the region immediately around us.

Instead of passing up the hill ahead of us to Nejrân, the approach to which is by a winding path, rough and rocky, we will descend into Wady Kŭnawât. The stream which comes down that valley in winter from Kŭnawât passes out on to the plain of el Haurân west of Edhra', and forms one of the tributaries of the river Jarmuk, which unites with the Jordan near Jisr el Mejâmia' and about ten miles south of the lake of Tiberias. When our party descended into this wady on our way from Nejrân, the stream whose dry bed we have just crossed was then so swollen by the great rains and melting snow on Jebel Haurân that we could not ford it, and had to follow up its course for several miles to find a place where it could be safely crossed. Now there is not a drop of water in it, and we can take the direct course south-east to Suleim, which is the next place to be visited on our way to Kŭnawât.

A few miles east of Nejrân and north of Suleim, on the crest of a rocky ridge in Wady Nimreh, is a place called Shŭhba, once a large city. It was, says Dr. Porter, "almost entirely Roman — the ramparts are Roman, the streets have the old Roman pavement, Roman temples appear in every quarter, a Roman theatre remains nearly perfect, a Roman aqueduct brought water from the distant mountains, inscriptions of the Roman age, though in Greek, are found on every public building. A few of the ancient massive houses, with their stone doors and stone roofs, yet exist, but they are in a great measure concealed or built over with the later and more graceful structures of Greek and Roman origin. Though the city was nearly three miles in circuit, and abounded in splendid buildings, its ancient name is lost, and its ancient history unknown. Its modern name is derived from a princely Mohammedan family [Beit Shehâb], which settled here in the seventh century."[1]

Shŭhba had two main streets running from east to west and from north to south, which crossed each other in the middle of the town. The streets are about twenty feet wide, and were well paved with long slabs, which in many places remain in an almost perfect condition. The gates at the end of the streets were formed of two arches, with a pillar in the centre, and those on the east and south are nearly entire. At the intersection of the streets there are the remains of four massive pedestals of solid masonry, each about fifteen feet square and ten feet high. About two hundred yards to the west of those pedestals, on the right of the street, are the ruins of a temple, and five of the six Corinthian columns that once formed the portico are still standing.

There are also the remains of other temples, baths, and public buildings in that neighborhood. The entrance to the baths was lofty, the walls containing the water-pipes were very massive, and the various vaulted chambers were high and of different sizes. But the theatre at Shŭhba is the most perfect of all the public edifices. It was built on a sloping site overlooking the plain, and the enclosing walls, which were nearly ten feet thick, are still in a good state of preservation. There were three doors in front, and nine vaulted entrances on the sides leading into the interior. The arena was

[1] Bashan and its Giant Cities, p. 37.

about fifty feet square, and there were seven tiers of seats and seven rows of benches, divided by a broad passage-way, which apparently extended quite round the building.

From Greek inscriptions found there it appears that Shŭhba must have been a place of importance during the second and third centuries of our era, and both M. Waddington and the Count de Vogüé are of the opinion that it occupies the site of Philippopolis, the birthplace of the Emperor Philip. He is said to have been the son of a celebrated Arab chief of Trachonitis, and was chosen emperor by the Roman army which he commanded in the East about the middle of the third century; and one of his first acts was the founding of a city in this region which he dignified with the name of Philippopolis in honor of himself.

To those of us who have been familiar for nearly half a century with the fortunes and misfortunes of the Shehâb Emîrs on Lebanon and elsewhere, Shŭhba is invested with peculiar interest. According to one tradition the ancestors of that family left Arabia about the time of Muhammed, with whose tribe of Kureish they claimed relationship, and settled in Shŭhba, to which place they gave their own name. The tradition may be true, but Tannûs esh Shidiak, the native historian and unlimited panegyrist of the family, makes Edhra' their adopted home, adding that they were called Edhra'ites from the place of their abode, and says nothing about Shŭhba. The Shehâbs, however, may have removed from Shŭhba to Edhra'.

Their migration still farther westward in the twelfth century was occasioned by the wars between Nûr ed Dîn and Salâh ed Dîn, the great Saladin. The historian informs us that, owing to their fear of Nûr ed Dîn in Damascus, the entire Shehâb family, with fifteen thousand followers, set out for Egypt to seek the protection of Saladin. But when they reached Jisr Benât Ya'kôb, over the Jordan, they were overtaken by messengers from Nûr ed Dîn, urging them to remain in the country and granting them permission to reside wherever they desired. They acceded to his request, and chose the valley of the upper Jordan as their abode; and after many conflicts with the Crusaders, whose head-quarters in that region were then at the castle of esh Shŭkîf, they succeeded in establishing themselves at Hâsbeiya and Rasheiyet el Wady, where they

continued to reside and misgovern the country down to the present century in and around the valley of the upper Jordan.

When the Mongols under Hûlagû Khân, the grandson of the great Genghis Khân, invaded Syria in the thirteenth century, the Shehâbs, according to their historian, sent their families for safety from the districts of Wady et Teim to that of esh Shûf, and thenceforth they began to play an important part in the affairs of the Lebanon. The celebrated Emîr Beshîr, after the defeat and death of his Druse rival, Sheikh Beshîr Jumblât, of el Mukhtârah, in the early part of this century, became sole Prince of Lebanon. He, from necessity rather than choice, sided with Muhammed 'Aly of Egypt in his rebellion against the Sultân, and when the combined fleets of Europe came, in 1840, to restore Syria to the Turks, the Emîr Beshîr surrendered to the English at Sidon and was taken to Malta, whence he was allowed to go to Constantinople to intercede with the Sultân for his restoration, and there he died.

The Shehâb emîrs who remained on Lebanon attempted to regain their lost power by exciting those civil wars which have convulsed that whole mountain more than once and covered Lebanon with many burned villages. The terrible massacres of 1860 completed the overthrow of the Shehâbs both in Wady et Teim and in Lebanon. They have now sunk into ruin more utter and hopeless than that which overwhelmed Shŭhba, their traditional abode in the Haurân, and the later catastrophies in their disastrous history I have myself witnessed. But we must not forget that they claimed the longest pedigree of any "house" on earth. By the aid of their kinship to Muhammed, Abraham, and Noah, they override the Deluge and sail triumphantly down the stream of Time from "the beginning" to the present hour.

Had our arrangements permitted I should have liked to visit Shŭhba, for it seems to abound with ancient remains of many kinds, and of special interest to the traveller and the archæologist.

The road to it leads through a wild and rocky region, and we shall have repeated opportunities in the near future to examine temples, theatres, and colonnades far greater and grander than those of Shŭhba. Let us, therefore, rest contented for this day with the temple at Suleim and those at Kŭnâwat.

We have fallen temples and prostrate churches on either hand. Nearly every hamlet has some of those monuments to show, and I feel as though we were travelling through wonderland with the fossilized antiquities of by-gone ages and untold generations crumbling to ruin all around and about us.

There is nothing to suggest such melancholy thoughts in the appearance of this temple at Suleim which we are now approaching.

It is indeed a beautiful edifice, though the cornice is, perhaps, too lofty and quite overburdened with architectural ornamentation. One is surprised to find it in such an isolated position.

The walls of the temple are still standing and nearly perfect, with the exception of the central portion and the portico on the east side, where there has been a perfect avalanche of large stones, occasioned by the falling in of the roof and the upper parts of the walls. The temple appears to have been profusely decorated, judging from the number of these large blocks covered with scroll-work, and garlands and wreaths of fruits, flowers, and leaves in bass-relief. On one of the stones found in front of the temple there is a well-preserved Greek inscription of six lines, the last of which is to the effect that this temple was erected by Sadus of Neapolis. From which it has been supposed that Suleim occupies the site of the Episcopal city of that name, whose bishop was present at the councils of Chalcedon and Constantinople. M. Waddington, however, is of the opinion that it was called Selæma during the Græco-Roman period—only another form of its present Arabic name.

This cavernous cistern in front of the temple is one of the largest we have seen in this region.

It is about twenty-five feet square and nearly thirty feet deep. The stone slabs forming the roof rested on corbels and were supported by three arches. The interior appears to have been covered with cement, and the cistern was probably a large reservoir for the supply of the temple, though it might have been used for the storage of grain. The ruins of the old town around the modern village of Suleim, situated on that low tell a short distance south of this temple, are almost two miles in circumference; but, with the exception of the foundations of another temple and the remains of a bath, we shall see nothing there to attract our special attention.



TEMPLE AT SULEIM.

Here come charging down upon us the pupils of the village school, I suppose, a noisy band of thirty or forty boys, with their native teacher bringing up the rear. He can speak a little English, it seems—and both are a most unexpected sight and sound in this wild "mountain of the Druses."

Both are easily explained. A benevolent English gentleman has sent the teacher here to open a school amongst his own people, and he acquired his knowledge of English, such as it is, in the missionary institutions on Lebanon. He says the people are anxious to have their children educated, and the number of scholars certainly

confirms his statement. We must decline the invitation to rest and partake of a cup of coffee and other refreshments which the gathering company press upon us with such persistency. I am sorry to disappoint them, but I know by experience that their "two moments" would lengthen into as many hours, and we cannot spare the time even to enjoy the proverbial hospitality of the Druses of the Haurân. So, with the usual profusion of regrets and salâms, we will bid good-bye to Suleim and follow our caravan.

We shall take the most direct road to our destination, which leads up through the open country in a direction nearly south-east, and most of the way through a well-wooded region. Kŭnawât, situated upon the western slope of Jebel ed Druse, is about two hours distant, and we must quicken our pace that we may have time before dark to inspect the extensive remains of that ancient city.

These numerous temples and public buildings in this region are apparently of Greek or Roman origin, and the question continually arises, not so much in reference to the architects who erected them, but as to the character of the people who required such edifices for their religious worship and secular entertainment.

The population is now and has been for many centuries Arabic, and nothing but that language has been spoken here for unnumbered generations. The inference is, therefore, inevitable that even before the time when those structures were erected, and during the first centuries of the Christian era, there was a large Græco-Roman population in this region. In all directions, from el Musmeih on the north to 'Ammân on the south, there was a continuous succession of such temples and public buildings. There are more Greek inscriptions in this general region east of the Jordan than in all Syria and Palestine together. But that foreign population has entirely disappeared. There is not, I suppose, one drop of Greek or Roman blood in any of the present inhabitants, nor a trace of their language either. These facts may corroborate and explain the peculiar linguistic condition that prevailed amongst the people who dwelt east of the Jordan and the Lake of Tiberias.

That "great and wide" region at and before the commencement of our era was called "the Decapolis," from a group of ten of the principal cities within it, which appear to have been endowed with

certain privileges by the Romans. Of those cities Damascus was the one farthest to the north, Canatha or Kŭnawât to the east, and Gerasa, or Jerash, the most southern.

Those ten important cities must have exerted a controlling influence upon the commerce, the civilization, and the language of this part of the country for several centuries.

The region of the Decapolis is mentioned more than once in the New Testament. When "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching and preaching and healing all manner of sickness among the people, his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were taken with divers diseases, and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from beyond Jordan."[1]

After the drowning of the swine by the entering into them of the devils which Jesus had cast out of the demoniac whose name was Legion, "and when Jesus was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but said unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how the Lord hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel."[2] Our Lord himself visited parts of that region, and upon one occasion "he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis."[3] That is, he went northward, then eastward, and probably crossed the Jordan at Dan and came down through the region east of that river until he reached the shores of the Lake of Tiberias.

We have been following along the remains of a Roman road, and now we are entering a beautiful forest of evergreen oaks which seems to extend a great distance over the range of Jebel Haurân.

Kŭnawât itself is surrounded by it, and many of the ruins are embowered beneath wide-spreading sindiân trees, as these scrub-oaks are called by the natives, and here and there some of the columns are seen rising above the dense foliage. How different is our present approach from that on my former visit. In half an hour after leaving Suleim we came to this rattling brook, then not easy

[1] Matt. iv. 23–25. [2] Mark v. 1–20. [3] Mark vii. 31, R. V.

to cross. Now there is not a drop of water in its rocky bed. Ten minutes farther there was another stream equally boisterous, and in fifteen minutes more we came to the main stream of the Kŭnawâty. It had overflowed its banks, and we floundered into and out of deep pools and rocky channels through which the river made its way northward amongst these oak-trees. Now we shall find no water in the deepest of those pools to refresh our tired and thirsty animals.

Our day's journey, after crossing this modern bridge, is nearly over, for we are entering the narrow lanes that lead up into the town, having high-walled gardens on either side. We will hand our horses to the servants and walk, for the road, though broad and well paved, is worn and slippery, and there are some important ruins to claim attention before we enter the town.

You notice that the general direction of Wady Kŭnawât, in this part of its course, is northward, and that the city proper was on the western side of it. Before passing to the tents, therefore, we may as well cross to the eastern side of the wady and examine two structures there that well merit our attention.

This edifice in Wady Kŭnawât above the bridge and the river is a pretty little theatre partly hewn out of the surrounding rock. It was about sixty feet in diameter, and had nine tiers of seats, which are still in a good state of preservation; and there was a cistern in the middle of the arena. From a long Greek inscription, in very large letters, which runs round the entire wall back of the arena, we learn that this theatre was constructed at the expense of a Roman officer named Marcus Oulpius Lusias, and presented by him to the citizens of Cànatha.

The view to the north-west over the oak woods and the plain of the Haurân to the distant mountains and to the snowy summit of Hermon beyond them is superb; and those seated on these benches could not only witness the spectacle in the arena of the theatre, but they could also gaze upon a varied and beautiful prospect of great extent and special interest.

This other building a few rods higher up the wady was constructed with large, well-cut stone, and it had a fountain within the court which was supplied with water from a small stream flowing underground behind it, and which formerly supplied the theatre also.

The water from this fountain so overflowed the court when I was here in April that I could not examine this singular structure. It is supposed to have been a small temple or Nymphæum, but it was probably designed for a public bath.

On the mountain ridge east of it is a conspicuous and massive round tower, which is reached from this bath by a long and winding stair-way cut in the rock. It is about one hundred feet in circumference, and in its present condition not over twenty feet high. Within it are heavy stone doors, some of them having well-cut mouldings and panels, and ornamented with sculptured wreaths of flowers and fruits. There are similar towers occupying commanding positions upon the surrounding hills, and which were evidently constructed for purposes of defence. The large rough stones with which they were built are bevelled, and the walls were very thick, suggesting the name cyclopean. The remains of some of those towers are probably among the oldest ruins of ancient Kenath. We will now return to the west side of the wady and rest awhile in our tents, pitched in the oak woods north-west of the town.

Refreshed and invigorated, let us resume our examination of the extensive remains of Canatha.

A walk of five minutes will bring us to the northern entrance of the main street, which rises gradually southward, leading towards the principal group of ancient buildings in Kŭnawât. The street is quite wide and is paved with large slabs of lava, which in some places are still well preserved.

Some of the houses on the west side of this street, with their sculptured stone doors ornamented with panels and floral designs, were evidently very substantial edifices.

Below us on the east is the deep wady, with almost perpendicular banks, which must have served as a natural fortification, and they appear to have been farther strengthened by the city wall which ran along the top of the cliffs in that direction.

Continuing the ascent southwards, we come to where the street ends abruptly at a large paved area in front of an imposing group of buildings called by the natives es Serai, or the palace, and also Deir Eyûb, the convent of Job. It is now almost impossible to decide what this group of buildings was originally intended to repre-

sent, since only three of them are still in a tolerable state of preservation, and the remains of others must be buried under these confused masses of ruins. The exterior walls appear to have enclosed an area nearly square, and the space within was evidently occupied by three edifices whose external walls, running north and south, were almost parallel to each other.

The one we will first enter, through this beautiful door-way on the eastern side so richly ornamented with wreaths of flowers and fruit, is almost one hundred feet long and seventy feet wide. It stood upon a raised basement, and had a portico on the north consisting of eight Corinthian columns about thirty feet high, with brackets on the shafts for statues. This edifice had few architectural ornaments except those on the door-way, and it appears to have been converted at one time into a church.

The second and middle structure is about eighty feet long and seventy feet wide, and it had a receding portico of six Corinthian columns. Curious sculptured figures surrounded by wreaths of vine-leaves and clusters of grapes are seen upon portions of the frieze and cornice of the portico now lying among the ruins of the fallen pediment. A colonnade of eighteen columns having plain square capitals ran round the four sides of this edifice at a distance of about twelve feet from the interior walls.

The third edifice is larger than either of the others, and was entered through an elaborately ornamented and beautiful gate-way in the south wall of the middle structure. A double colonnade of seven columns, with plain square capitals, ran down the eastern and western sides of this edifice, and at its southern end there was a semicircular apse about fifteen feet in depth. But the interior is filled with confused heaps of fallen masonry, and much of it is so overgrown with bramble-bushes and scrub-oaks that it cannot be examined. From Greek inscriptions found among the ruins, but which are now difficult to decipher, it would appear that some of these edifices were dedicated to heathen gods and subsequently converted into Christian churches; and here we see the emblem of the cross placed over the entrance of ancient idol temples.

Leaving this impressive group of ruined edifices, with their prostrate walls and standing columns, their fallen pediments and ancient



ES SERAI OR DEIR EYUB—PALACE OR CONVENT OF JOB.



portals so curiously and beautifully sculptured, we will proceed a short distance to the south-west and examine the remains of what must once have been a splendid temple. In front of the so-called Convent of Job, and also between it and this temple, there are large cisterns, once entirely vaulted over by long slabs of lava resting upon parallel lines of arches. There are at least ten of these lines, and in many places the slabs are still quite perfect. These cisterns were probably intended to supply the temples and other edifices in that neighborhood with water during the autumn.



TEMPLE AT KŬNAWÂT.

Like most of the other public buildings at Kŭnawât, this temple faced the north; and it is considered a fine specimen of the Roman prostyle—that is, a temple whose portico extended along the entire

front of the edifice. Four Corinthian columns, over fifteen feet in circumference and more than thirty-five feet high, supporting a pediment, formed the portico, and back of them, between the extended side-walls or wings of the temple, was the pronaos or vestibule, with two smaller columns in front. In the east and west walls of the vestibule there were two niches, one above the other, and in the south wall of the temple, opposite the entrance to the naos or body of the edifice, there were two similar and larger niches. The walls of this temple are mostly in ruins, and of the six columns in front of it only four still remain standing.

Among some fragments of sculptured figures lying about in front of the temple, Dr. Porter discovered a colossal head in high-relief: "The face is broad and the cheeks large. The eyes are well formed, but the forehead is low, and the brows prominent and contracted. On the forehead is a crescent, with rays shooting upwards; the face is encircled with thick tresses. The mouth and chin are broken away. It struck me at the time," he says, "that this was probably intended to represent Ashtoreth," perhaps once the chief idol of this temple.[1] More recently Mr. Charles F. Tyrwhitt Drake obtained here a fragment of an altar, with the supposed heads of Baal and Ashtoreth "boldly cut in high-relief upon the closest basalt, with foliage showing the artistic hand."[2] Since then the members of the American Palestine Exploration Society passed through this region during a reconnoissance of the country east of the Jordan in the autumn of 1875, and they found a fine antique head here, apparently the same as that seen and described by Dr. Porter, and they obtained an excellent photograph of it.

Regarding the worship of Ashtoreth, Dr. Porter remarks that she "was the goddess of the Phœnicians, the Philistines, and, indeed, the whole inhabitants of Syria.[3] Her worship was introduced among the Israelites during the rule of the Judges, was practised by Solomon, and was abolished by Josiah.[4] She was the representative of the moon, hence the crescent and the rays seen upon figures on early Phœnician and Roman coins; hence, too, Jeremiah's

[1] Five Years in Damascus, pp. 212, 213; Giant Cities of Bashan, p. 43.

[2] Unexplored Syria, vol. ii. p. 166. [3] 1 Kings xi. 5, 33; 1 Sam. xxxi. 10.

[4] Judg. ii. 13; 1 Sam. vii. 4; 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

reference to her as 'queen of heaven.'[1] In classic authors she is called Astarte, Aphrodite, and Syria Dea.[2] In the country east of the Jordan, and especially in Bashan, Ashtoreth was worshipped from a very early age. One of its principal cities was called Ashtoreth Karnaim, 'Ashtoreth of the two horns' or crescent, and this city was one of the capitals of the Kingdom of Bashan at the Exodus. It is, consequently, highly interesting to find in Kenath [or Kŭnawât], one of the most ancient cities of Bashan, monumental evidence of the worship of Ashtoreth."[3]



ANTIQUE HEAD AT KŬNAWÂT.

Continuing our walk north along the city wall and down these terraced fields for about twenty minutes, we will come to the remains of one of the most striking and picturesque peripteral temples in this part of the country. It stands facing the east, on a slight eminence in this thickly wooded valley, a short distance beyond the western gate of the ancient city; and it was built upon a stylobate or raised platform eighty feet by fifty and about twelve feet high, beneath which are massive vaults and at least one cistern, which still holds water.

A broad flight of steps led up to the portico, which consisted of two rows of columns, six in each row; and the temple itself was surrounded—hence its name—on the east, south, and west by a range of sixteen columns, six on each side counting the corner columns twice. These, with those of the portico, made twenty-eight

[1] Jer. vii. 18; 2 Kings xxiii. 4. [2] Lucian: De Syria Dea; Paus. i. 14.

[3] Five Years in Damascus, p. 213.

columns in all, and they stood upon pedestals five feet high, were six feet in circumference, had Corinthian capitals, and a total height of more than thirty-five feet. Of all those columns only seven, and the bases and pedestals of a few others, remain standing.



PERIPTERAL TEMPLE AT KŬNAWÂT.

This temple was about forty-five feet long and thirty feet broad, and there were eight pilasters along the exterior walls corresponding to the same number of columns opposite to them. From inscriptions found here it is supposed that this temple was dedicated to Helios, or the sun, but most of those seen upon the pedestals of the columns are quite illegible. We will now return through the open fields to our tents.

September 19th. Evening.

Kŭnawât has been generally regarded as the modern representative of the ancient Kenath and the Hebrew Nobah. Is there any valid objection to that identification?

Under that name Kenath is mentioned but twice in the Bible. We read in Numbers that during the conquest of the land of Canaan, "Jair took the small towns" of Gilead "and called them Havoth-jair;" and that Nobah also "went and took Kenath and the villages thereof and called it Nobah, after his own name."[1] Also that "Jair took all the country of Argob and called them [the towns] after his own name—Bashan-havoth-jair," the towns of Jair in Bashan; and in 1 Chronicles, ii. 23, Kenath is mentioned in connection with those towns of Jair.[2] Two hundred years later we learn that Gideon, in pursuit of the two kings of Midian, "went up by the way of them that dwell in tents on the east of Nobah"—by which, of course, Kenath is meant—"and smote the host."[3]

Though Nobah probably was not so called by the people who then inhabited it, the name of its Hebrew conqueror was still familiar to the Israelites; but, like so many others imposed by foreign rulers, it soon fell into disuse, and the place appears ever after to have retained its original name—Kenath. From those incidental notices it would appear that Nobah or Kenath was between Gilead and Argob, and within the territory of Bashan. This is all its Biblical history, and we hear nothing more about it until the time of the Romans, about the commencement of the Christian era.

Josephus relates that Herod the Great, through the machinations of "Athenio, one of Cleopatra's generals," was defeated "at Kanatha, a city of Cœlesyria," by the inhabitants of the place, assisted by the Arabians, who had assembled there "in vast multitudes."[4] Ptolemy also locates Kanatha in Cœlesyria, and Pliny mentions it among the cities of the Decapolis. But we get more definite information regarding its actual position from Eusebius and the Peutinger Table. In the latter it is the third station on the Roman road from Damascus to Bostra; and the former speaks of it as "situated in the province of Trachonitis, near to Bostra."

It therefore seems to be fairly established that Kŭnawât occupies the site of the Biblical Kenath or Nobah, and that the ancient name has remained almost unchanged during a period of more than three thousand years. M. Waddington, however, is inclined to ques-

[1] Numb. xxxii. 41, 42.
[2] Deut. iii. 14; Josh. xiii. 30.
[3] Judg. viii. 4, 5, 11.
[4] B. J. i. 19, 2.

tion the identification mainly on the ground that its location is too far east for it to have ever been in the possession of the Hebrews. That objection can have but little weight, since even he admits that Sŭlkhad, which is still farther east than Kŭnawât, is the Salcah, or Salchah, of the Bible mentioned by Moses.

M. Waddington found more than thirty Greek inscriptions on various parts of the ruins in this place; most of them, however, are brief, and do not throw much light on the history of either the Biblical Kenath or the Græco-Roman Kanatha. One of them seems to connect the name of King Agrippa with Kŭnawât, and this is confirmed by inscriptions which M. Waddington discovered at Si'a, where the names of both Herod the Great and of Agrippa are found in Greek and Aramaic upon the ruins of a remarkable temple at that place, a discovery of special interest and importance.

The Herodian inscription was found upon the base of a broken statue in front of the temple, and M. Waddington interprets it thus: I, Obaesatus, son of Saodus, have set up this statue of King Herod, our ruler, at my own expense. "This monument," says M. Waddington, "is the earliest in which Herod is mentioned, and the [Greek] word Kuriō shows that it was erected during his life," more than nineteen hundred years ago. It is an interesting fact that all this region was granted to Herod the Great by Cæsar, as Josephus informs us in the fifteenth book of his Antiquities.[1]

Si'a may have been regarded as a suburb of Kŭnawât, for it is not more than half an hour's walk from it towards the south-east. When I was here in the spring we did not go to Si'a, because that place was buried under the snow; and not only was the river of Kŭnawât a foaming torrent, but much of the country was flooded by the melting snow on the Haurân mountains, and banks of snow were still seen in these streets. Three different streams, quite formidable to cross, then descended through the woods north of Kŭnawât and united with the river in the wady below, which thus became altogether unfordable. It then seemed incredible that in the late autumn one could scarcely procure sufficient water for himself and his horse even for money, and yet such had been the experience of one of our party in this region.

[1] Ant. xv. 10. 1. 2.

Kŭnawât is a fair illustration of the fact that the population of this part of the Haurân has steadily increased during the last half century. Burckhardt, in 1812, found here "only two Druse families, who were occupied in cultivating a few tobacco-fields." Forty years later Dr. Porter was "favored with a visit from the village school-master"—the first he had heard of in the Haurân—"a venerable old man, with sparkling eyes and a flowing beard.

"His school consisted of some twenty children; and I had seen them bawling over their lessons on a house-top. The scholars had no books, and [their 'master'] was obliged to teach them by writing letters and words on little boards, which they carried about and rhymed over till form and sound became familiar. I afterwards saw the little urchins walking through the city, proud of their boards, which were strung round their necks.

"Here there was a zeal for instruction altogether remarkable. I could not but sympathize with these poor children, forced to learn the first principles of their language from rude letters scratched upon rough boards; and I could not but look with a feeling of respect and admiration on the man who, without remuneration, gave himself up to the self-imposed task of instructing youth. I learned that most of the boys and young men in the village could read, and not a few of them write."[1]

But it grows late, and

> "The deep night is crept upon our talk,
> And nature must obey necessity."

[1] Five Years in Damascus, pp. 206, 207.

XIII.

KŬNAWÂT TO EL BUSRAH.

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September 20th.

WE have held quite a levee this morning, and I have been at a loss to discover the motive of such friendly demonstrations on the part of these polite and courteous Druses.

They are always anticipating trouble with the government, and they hope that we may be able to speak a good word in their behalf to those who have influence with the Turkish authorities in this country. The Druses, from their warlike character and almost impregnable position upon and around the mountains of the Haurân, may be regarded as exerting a favorable influence over this entire region. The Bedawîn tribes north, east, and south are more afraid of them than of the Turkish Government, and hence their destructive incursions are held in check. Were it not for that, there would be but few inhabited villages in this part of the country. And as the number of the Druses is steadily increasing by emigration from the Lebanon and Ante-Lebanon, their influence is constantly increas-

ing also, and places not long since deserted are now reoccupied. It is also largely owing to this growing power of the Druses that Moslem and even Christian villages are multiplying.

The Druses, in fact, constitute the nucleus of a power which, rightly directed, might ultimately redeem this beautiful region from the devastations of the Bedawîn. But they are themselves a fierce and lawless generation, and are sadly in need of the higher civilizing influence of Christianity and of Christian schools. There is, however, some reason for hope in regard to them, for they are not Moslems nor fanatical, and in several places they are beginning to appreciate the benefits of education and to ask earnestly for schools. That was one of the subjects broached this morning by the sheikhs of Kŭnawât, and I promised to submit their request to those to whom that work naturally belongs.

It seems to me that Kŭnawât presents a fair field for such benevolent and philanthropic work.

It is quite central, and certainly high enough to be cool and healthy, and from it a large number of villages could be reached. But those who would undertake such an enterprise should be prepared to deal with a rude and lawless population, and to overcome many obstacles. Some of the most formidable will arise from local feuds between neighboring villages, and also from quarrels among the inhabitants of the same village. The people of Kŭnawât are famous for such quarrels, and not long since the rival parties had a desperate encounter in which several persons are said to have been killed and many more were wounded.

And now, as those courteous Druses have bidden us farewell and godspeed in their characteristic fashion and in a style eminently Oriental, we will mount our horses and proceed on our way.

It is pleasant to ride through these oak woods, which appear to extend far up the mountains to the east and north of Kŭnawât.

An easy descent westward of nearly three-quarters of an hour will bring us to 'Atîl, where we shall find the remains of an equestrian statue, fragments of statuary in bass-relief, two ancient temples, and several inscriptions well worthy of examination.

The village appears to be quite small, but it is prettily situated on the western border of these evergreen woods.

'Atîl is occupied at present by a few Druse families, and a portion of this temple, in the south-eastern part of the village, has been converted into a dwelling, and is now the residence of the sheikh of the place. The temple, constructed of hard basalt, stood upon a platform or stylobate about ten feet high. It was small but well-proportioned, and the shell-work and other ornamental carving



TEMPLE AT 'ATÎL.

about the front was rich and beautifully executed. The order of architecture is Corinthian, and the walls of the temple projected on either side of the portico, which consisted of two fluted columns, with two plain ones in front and square pilasters or antæ at the corners of the edifice. There are brackets nearly half-way up the pillars and columns, apparently placed there for statues.

From a curious bilingual inscription, discovered at Trevoux in France, it appears that the Greek name of this place was Athila. M. Waddington found here eight inscriptions, some of them remarkably well preserved and others mere fragments. This inscription on the base of the pilaster at the southern corner of the temple is quite perfect, and from it we learn that the edifice was built about the fourteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, corresponding to A.D. 151. Inscriptions have also been found here in honor of heathen deities, Roman emperors and centurions, and one which contains the name of Zenodorus, a famous person who, according to Josephus, figured largely in the history of this region about the commencement of our era.

Here, in this field, just south of the temple, are the remains of the equestrian statue and of the bass-relief representing a female figure with wings. A third fragment, quite large, is supposed to be the head of Baal; and a fourth, with the crescent moon rising from the shoulders, may have represented Astarte. Similar fragments are built into the walls of the gardens and dwellings in the neighborhood. All the statues have been broken by fanatical Moslems, and the sight of these fragments excites one's indignation against the iconoclastic vandalism that has so wantonly destroyed them.

The other temple, at the northern end of the village, is a complete ruin, and as these noisy lads are anxious to show us the way to el Kŭsr, or the palace, as they call it, we will gratify them, and thereby furnish occasion to distribute bakhshîsh. Some of these Druses are from the Lebanon, and claim to be old acquaintances.

This temple appears to have been inferior in every respect to the one in the southern part of 'Atîl; and nothing now remains standing except a part of the main entrance. There are no inscriptions, but if the large blocks that lie about were turned over, some might be found; and if the débris was cleared away, the side portals, now buried under the rubbish, and the foundations of the temple would then be fully exposed to view.

We will now go to see the fragments of a very curious column just east of the village. Portions of it are built into a garden-wall near this birkeh, or stagnant pool, the drainage of the surrounding terraces, that supplies the inhabitants of 'Atîl with water.

If the people drink this yellowish-green fluid, no wonder that half of them have the ague, and all look pale and cadaverous.

They can procure better water by going for it only a short distance, but most of them are too lazy and shiftless to do so. There are the fragments of the column which, as you perceive, are carved in imitation of the bole, or stem, of the palm-tree. It is wholly unique, and when erected must have been quite high, as appears from the different portions, if, indeed, they all belonged to one single column. And now we must bid these polite attendants a formal farewell and pursue our ride southward to es Suweideh, about an hour and a half distant from 'Atîl.

We are again on a well-defined Roman road, and it is bringing us into a beautiful grove of oak and other evergreen trees.

It will take us an hour to ride through this grove, and after we pass out of its grateful shade, the country becomes quite bare and loses much of its picturesqueness. During the time of the Romans that ancient road led to es Suweideh, then one of the principal cities in this region, though now reduced to a mere village and almost buried under the remains of its former greatness.

In the spring, the road was impassable in many places, owing to deep mud, and we often had to pick our way through the fields on either side in order to afford a sure footing to our perplexed horses. Now it is dry and dusty, and far from being either smooth or agreeable. Like nearly all the Roman roads in this country, the pavement of this one has been broken up by the heavy rains in winter, and has almost entirely disappeared.

The massive ruins of es Suweideh begin to appear ahead of us in the distance, and before entering their bewildering labyrinths we will turn to the left and ascend the northern side of the wady to examine one of the most singular monuments in this region. It is called ed Debûsîyeh by the natives, and was built of solid masonry upon a base approached by two steps. In shape it was a cube of about thirty-three feet side, and finished above in the form of a pyramid, and when perfect it must have been nearly forty feet high. There are six pilasters, or semi-columns, of the Doric order on each side, supporting a plain cornice; and upon the walls between them are sculptured emblems and ancient armor represent-

ing coats of mail, helmets, and shields in bass-relief. The pyramid has fallen, but the sides of this monument are nearly perfect, and it appears never to have had an entrance of any kind.

There is a Greek inscription on the northern side, and one in Palmyrene on the eastern side. Both are to the same effect, and briefly state that "Odenathus, son of Annelos, built this tomb to Chamrate his wife." That Odenathus was a different person from the husband of Zenobia, who ruled in Palmyra more than two hundred and fifty years after the time of Herod the Great. Count de Vogüé supposes that he was an Arabian chief whose tribe had possession of this region before the reign of Herod; and M. Waddington thinks that this monument is one of the most ancient structures in the Haurân, though he does not believe that it dates much further back than the commencement of the Christian era.

We will now cross over to the other side of this deep wady of Suweideh, and examine the ruins of that ancient town.

The river in the wady is now dry, yet it is spanned by a well-built Roman bridge of a single arch, whose height implies that the stream is sometimes quite a formidable torrent.

It is so during the winter and early spring, and then the volume of water is more than sufficient to drive the flour-mills of the village in the valley below the bridge. Suweideh was built, as you see, entirely on the south bank of the wady and upon a low, rocky ridge, which extends westward to the plain of el Haurân. The first object that attracts attention in advance of that wilderness of ruins is this large reservoir on our right, from which the present inhabitants of es Suweideh are supplied with water, there being no springs or permanent fountain in the village. This reservoir is nearly a thousand feet in circuit and at least thirty feet deep. It was full when I was here in the spring, but now it is almost empty, and has by no means an inviting appearance.

There is a larger reservoir south-west of the village, called Birket el Haj because formerly it was one of the watering-places of the Mecca pilgrims. Both reservoirs were lined with stone, and stone steps led down to the bottom of them. Above us on the left, at the east end of the town, are the remains of a temple, once surrounded by a colonnade of twenty-two Corinthian columns, only

about half of which now remain standing. From the disposition of the columns, their various styles of workmanship, and different dimensions, the entire edifice was apparently constructed out of materials which belonged to other and more ancient structures.



TEMPLE AT ES SUWEIDEH.

When I was here, several years ago, the interior was a mass of ruins, but it has recently been transformed into the divan of the sheikh, whose humble dwelling is just east of it.

The main street commences near this temple, at a large gate-way probably intended for a triumphal arch, and leads down towards the south-west through the midst of the town, with fallen houses on either side, and the ruins of several public edifices that merit attention in passing. This semicircular structure, with niches and Corinthian pilasters, a short distance below the gate-way, was probably a nymphæum, or a public bath, and upon it is an inscription from which we learn that it was erected during the reign of the

Emperor Trajan, about the beginning of the second century of our era. The aqueduct with which it was connected, and which supplied it with water, may have been constructed at the same time.

This building, with arches and short columns which once supported the roof, is supposed to be a mosk, and it probably occupies the site of a temple or other public edifice. It is said to contain two Greek inscriptions, mentioning the names of certain trading companies of merchants who flourished in this region during the Græco-Roman period. According to another inscription found in that low building a short distance east of the mosk, there was erected here a temple dedicated to Minerva. And here, near the centre of the ancient city, is a large structure which appears to have been a church, probably erected during the fourth century, with perhaps a monastery attached to it. The street on the right, below this edifice, is a mere quagmire in the spring, and I saw several donkeys loaded with wheat floundering in it; nor could they be extricated until the ropes that bound the sacks upon their pack-saddles were cut loose and their loads removed.

A short distance farther down the street are the remains of a theatre. The walls are broken down, the seats all gone, and the entire edifice is too dilapidated to be described.

Has es Suweideh no ancient historic record?

It is nowhere alluded to in the Bible, at least not under any of the names by which it is now known or has been in times past. A tradition mentioned by William of Tyre, in the twelfth century, connects this place with Bildad the Shuhite, and the natives of Suweideh believe that Job himself was the first prince of their town. The remains of temples, churches, and other monuments prove that it must have been a flourishing city of the Græco-Roman period, having a mixed population of heathens and Christians dwelling together for a long time in comparative peace and quietness. M. Waddington found here twenty-five Greek inscriptions, most of which are, however, mere fragments; but from an extended analysis of them he throws much light upon the age of these remains and the probable history of the city itself.

Some of the inscriptions date back to the time of Herod the Great, and the Greek name of the place appears formerly to have

been Soada; but M. Waddington identifies it with the Dionysias mentioned in the Notitiæ of various ecclesiastical councils, from which it would seem that Soada was an episcopal city belonging to this part of Arabia. Hid away amongst these ruins of the ancient town, there is a mixed population said to number about five hundred Druses and a few Christians. Suweideh has long been regarded as the capital of Jebel ed Druse, as this portion of the Haurân is called, and the ruling sheikh still resides here.

The main street, through which we are passing, is not only very dry at present, but also quite dusty and disagreeable.

There is nothing of much interest in this wilderness of prostrate houses at the lower end of it, not even that tower which was about twenty feet square and thirty feet high. Beyond it the Roman road from Damascus to el Busrah or Bozrah passes southward through the country in almost a straight line.

We will now resume our ride. It is six hours from Suweideh to Bozrah, and the country between the two places is neither level nor mountainous, but agreeably diversified with hills, valleys, and plains. This is, in fact, a fine agricultural region and, during the winter season at least, abundantly supplied with water. But the greater part of it is destitute of trees and uncultivated. There are but few villages, and none of them are of much importance. Ere long we shall pass through the small village of Megeidel, and a short distance beyond it, to the left, is the hamlet of er Resâs, situated on the western slope of the Haurân mountain.

I remember er Resâs chiefly from the fact that on a former tour through this region we there left the direct road to Bozrah and turned eastward towards the lower declivities of Jebel Haurân, on our way to Sŭlkhad. In less than an hour we crossed what was then a considerable stream called Nahr 'Ary. Keeping up the southern side of it, we passed a succession of small flour-mills, all busily improving the unusual flow of water from the eastern mountains. From the higher ridges over which the path led we had distinct views of the great conical peak called Kuleib Haurân.

We have seen that high mountain from many places along our route during the past few days, and it has all the appearance of a volcanic cone of great size and height.

It dominates this entire region, and was once, no doubt, in the distant past an active volcano, and from it a great part of the lava and volcanic débris which cover the surrounding country were probably discharged. The entire eastern side of the mountain is quite bare, but it is covered with a straggling forest of oak, terebinth, and other evergreen trees and bushes on the south, west, and north, and the interior of the crater itself is said to be well-wooded. The south-western side of the crater appears to have been broken away, probably during a violent eruption in pre-historic times, leaving a wide and deep cavity in that part of the cone.

Kuleib Haurân rises more than five thousand five hundred feet above the sea, and though the ascent is not difficult, only a few travellers have made the attempt, owing principally to the lack of time and its isolated position. Burckhardt spent a night in a Bedawîn camp at its base, but he became too ill to ascend to the summit. He was told that the Mediterranean could be seen from the top on a clear day, probably through the plain of Esdraelon, and out upon the Bay of Acre beyond the cape of Mount Carmel. The prospect eastward over the Arabian desert was said to be boundless and exceedingly impressive.

Owing to deep mud our progress towards Sŭlkhad was slow, and as it began to rain we stopped at el 'Afîneh, a small village situated on a projecting ridge of the mountain, and only partly inhabited by Druses. Hebrân, a much larger place on the top of the ridge, is just above it to the north-east, and there are other ancient sites in all directions. We busied ourselves in copying some Greek inscriptions among the ruins, supposing that M. Waddington had not visited 'Afîneh, but subsequently I found them printed in full in his great work. From one of them we learn that the Emperor Trajan caused the water from Kŭnawât to be conducted to 'Afîneh; and some of the arches supporting that ancient aqueduct are still to be seen east of the village, and not far from the Roman road that led straight from Bozrah towards el Kufr.

As the night came on dark and stormy, the Druse sheikh of 'Afîneh urged us to share with him his gloomy and smoky habitation, but we chose rather to trust to our tents. The rain continued through the night, and by morning the tents were thoroughly satu-

rated, and in no condition to be folded up until they were partially dried by kindling small fires within them.

The people of the village assured us that the road to Sŭlkhad was quite impassable, and we were reluctantly obliged to abandon the idea of going there. Obtaining a guide we struck across the country, along an unfrequented pathway, directly southward towards el Kureiyeh, the site of an ancient city midway between el Busrah and Sŭlkhad. The path was at first very spongy, and fatiguing to our horses, but when we reached the level plain, the marshy nature of the soil ceased, and the road became more firm and solid. We had noticed the fact in other places that during great rains the ground became so saturated on the hill-sides that travelling was very disagreeable to both the horse and his rider.

It is less than two hours from 'Afîneh to Kureiyeh, yet in that short distance we crossed several lively little streams descending from the declivities of Kuleib Haurân and the eastern mountains in deep and tumultuous torrents. Our guide, however, assured us that in a few weeks they would all be quite dry. In most of that region the land is thickly strewn with volcanic bowlders, but the soil is naturally fertile though treeless and uncultivated, nor is there a single village between 'Afîneh and Kureiyeh.

From many points along the road the great mound of Sŭlkhad was clearly seen from summit to base and appeared surprisingly near. It was in reality not more than four miles south-east of us, and with the glass we could distinguish the broken walls of the castle that occupies the entire summit of the mound.

Did you find anything of special interest at Kureiyeh?

It was once a large city, and some of the remains appear to be ancient. The streets and lanes were quite impassable, owing to bottomless mud, and the few inhabitants we found there seemed to be miserably poor and shiftless. They were engaged mainly in sunning themselves on the walls of a large reservoir, to dry their tattered garments after the great rain of the previous night. Kureiyeh has been identified with Kerioth, one of "the cities of the land of Moab;" but there are some grave objections which require to be removed before the identification can be accepted. Similar difficulties, however, attach to el Busrah, and while there we can

examine the two questions together, and discuss other matters of interest connected with the Biblical history of that region.

What is the name of the village which we are now approaching, situated upon the low hill to the left of our road?

'Ary, supposed to occupy the site of Ariath, an episcopal city during the fourth century mentioned in the Notitiæ or old ecclesiastical records. The ruins of the ancient city are extensive but quite insignificant, and the modern village is now an inconsiderable place, the residence of a Druse family of recent origin, but formerly of great power and influence. It was the home of Isma'îl el Atrash, a Druse warrior very celebrated in this region about thirty years ago. He was summoned to Beirût by the Governor-general of Syria, and astonished the natives with his wild band of Haurân Druses. Small of stature, the personal appearance of Sheikh Isma'îl gave no indication of the daring chieftain, yet he was the terror of the Bedawîn all over this region; and his three sons are still leading sheikhs in Jebel ed Druse. Isma'îl el Atrash died more than ten years ago, and his tomb is just without the village.

Long before his day Burckhardt visited 'Ary on two separate occasions, and the Druse sheikh of the place appeared to be greatly pleased to see him. "Sheikh Shibly Ibn Hamdân," he says, "is the kindest and most generous Druse I have known in Syria; and his reputation for these qualities has become so general that peasants from all parts of the Haurân settle in his village. The whole of the Christian community of Suweideh, with the Greek priest at their head, had lately arrived, so that 'Ary has now become one of the most populous villages in this district. The high estimation in which the sheikh is held arises from his great hospitality, and the justice and mildness with which he treats the peasants, upward of forty of whom he feeds daily, besides strangers, who are continually passing here on their way to the Bedawîn encampments; the coffee-pot is always boiling in the menzûl, or strangers' room. He may now, in fact, be called the Druse chief of the Haurân, though that title belongs in strictness to his father-in-law, Hussein Ibn Hamdân, the sheikh of Suweideh."[1] Times and persons have greatly changed since Burckhardt visited 'Ary, and though the family of Hamdân

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., p. 225.

still exists in this region, its present sheikhs have lost most of their property, their ancient renown, and their former pre-eminence.

We have passed during the last hour the villages of Mujeimir and Wetr, situated on their tells a short distance to the left of our road, and for another hour we shall have the shattered walls and dark, massive towers and battlements of the celebrated city of el Busrah, upon the wide-spreading plain of Bashan, constantly in view. To the right of our road are the ruins of Deir Zubeir, a large square edifice with thick walls, and which, as its name implies, was probably once a monastery. And here we come upon the remains of the Roman road that led from Bozrah, or el Busrah, northward to Damascus. Traces of it, extending in a straight line across the plain, are distinctly visible, and in some places the solid pavement, composed of well-squared slabs of stone, is still almost perfect.

After crossing the small stream in Wady Zeidy, on the old Roman bridge of three arches, below Jemŭrrîn, we will turn aside and inspect the famous mosk called el Mebrŭk, the kneeling-place. Burckhardt gives the following account of its origin: "Ibn 'Affan, who first collected the scattered leaves of the Koran into a book, relates that when Othman, in coming from the Hedjaz, approached the neighborhood of Boszra with his army, he ordered his people to build a mosque on the spot where the camel which bore the Koran should kneel down." And he adds: "It is of no great size; its interior was embellished, like that of the great mosque [at el Medîna], with Cufic inscriptions, of which a few specimens yet remain over the mehrab, or niche towards which the face of the imâm is turned in praying. The dome or kubbeh which covered its summit has been recently destroyed by the Wahabi."[1]

If the tradition be reliable, this edifice occupies the site of the very first mosk which the Muhammedans erected in Syria. The method of being guided by the instinct of the camel was a favorite device of the early Moslem leaders, copied from the example of their Prophet. He thus pretended to ascertain at whose house he should alight in Medîna when he fled thither from Mecca, in the first month of the first year of the Muhammedan era. Mr. William Muir has given an amusing description of that singular incident

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., p. 235.

which decided as well the location of the first mosk that was ever built in the Muhammedan world.[1] And now we may alight at our tents, pitched under the shadow of the castle at el Busrah, on the south side of the town, where we can rest in quietness and safety during the coming Sabbath.

Sunday, September 21st.

With the exception of a few low hills in the distance, el Busrah stands out alone in the centre of this great plain of Bashan. The castle of Sŭlkhad is clearly seen crowning the summit of its lofty volcanic cone, about twelve or fourteen miles nearly due east, and the shattered walls of Um el Jemal, though five hours' ride across the southern desert, are said to be visible on a clear day from the top of the highest tower in the castle.

Um el Jemal, which many travellers have longed to visit, but failed in the attempt to do so, is supposed to occupy the site of the Beth-gamul mentioned by Jeremiah, is it not?

There appears to be some doubt in regard to the claim of that place to Biblical notice. It has been visited by Mr. Cyril C. Graham, M. Waddington, and the gentlemen of the American Palestine Exploration Society. Dr. Selah Merrill, the archæologist of the party, gives an interesting account of the ride through the desert to Um el Jemal, and a detailed description of the ruins at that place. They were encamped here at el Busrah, and, as an early start was necessary, Dr. Merrill says, "We left our camp at five o'clock, and, guided by a man with a lantern, made our way over the ruins and among the walls and columns of ancient palaces and temples to the castle here; for the officer in command, Ibrahîm Effendi, proposed, as he had never visited the place, and was 'very much interested in antiquities,' to accompany us with some soldiers. Fortunately the morning, and the whole day, as it proved, was quite cool, so that our ten hours and forty minutes in the saddle were less tedious than they might otherwise have been. We were in all twenty men, well mounted and well armed. Besides the animals we rode we had three extra ones for photographic apparatus and water.

"About two miles outside of Bozrah we came upon a large encampment of Bedawîn, numbering over one hundred long black

[1] Life of Mahomet, vol. iii. p. 9.

tents, and judging from the deafening howl, there were three or four dogs to every tent. Several hundred camels were scattered about in groups, and there was evidently excitement of some kind, for men were shouting and running about in all directions. Some of them ran up to our soldiers and told of a heavy robbery that had been committed during the night, and of the great loss they had suffered in cattle and camels. Our soldiers gave chase in the direction indicated by these men, and it was a fine sight to see them, with such of the Bedawîn as were mounted, dashing over the plain in their efforts to discover the robbers. These, however, had done their work too near morning, or else had taken more than they could manage, and had fled, leaving the camels, or most of them, to return at leisure to their masters. I counted, in a single string, one hundred and fifty camels thus making their way back. During the next hour or two we saw as many as half a dozen groups of camels at different places on the plain, that had passed through the experience of being stolen the night previous.

"Three miles south of Bozrah we struck the perpetual desert, the region of desolation. Not that the soil is barren, but in all this wide and naturally fertile district no man dare plough, plant, or build. Yet this desert shows signs of former cultivation, for the stones in many parts have at some time been gathered into long rows, evidently to serve as boundaries for fields. The plain is covered with a small alkali shrub, which resembles the sage-bush so common on the plains of the far West. The crocus also appeared in many places, and the contrast between the barren, burnt surface of the plain and these beautiful flowers was very striking. On the way we passed several ruins, the names of which we could not learn; and the same was true on our return, as we came the most of the way by a different route. There are scores of these ruined towns scattered about this plain awaiting the careful explorer. Far in the north-east the fortress of Sŭlkhad loomed up, a magnificent object on the horizon, commanding a view of all this wide plain to the north, east, south, and west. I noticed that the common barn-swallows were very abundant; and we also saw during the day ten or more gazelles, to some of which our men gave chase, but without success.

"We reached Um el Jemal after a ride of about five hours. The ruins do not abound in columns and temples, like those of Kŭnawât and Gerash; still they are imposing and make a peculiar impression upon one, because they stand alone in the desert. They are remarkable, in the first place, from the fact that they present only two prominent styles of architecture—namely, Roman and Christian, or Byzantine—and not half a dozen, as is so often the case in other places. They are remarkable, again, because they afford a good example of an unwalled town. But the walls of the houses in many cases join each other, and this would give the appearance of a city wall separate from the houses. If there was no wall, there was at least a gate to the city. This was broad, and composed of four arches. When perfect it was one of the principal ornaments of the place. The dwellings and edifices were not huddled together. There has been no building and rebuilding on the ruins of former buildings, according to later Oriental style.

"The open spaces about the houses were large, and the streets were broad, and at least two avenues ran through the city from north to south, one of which was one hundred feet wide, and the other nearly one hundred and fifty feet. Nothing appears crowded; everywhere there is a sense of roominess. It must have been a city noted for broad streets, spacious avenues, large courts, fine gardens and promenades. Again the houses, which were built of stone, were not only the finest, but the best preserved, of any in the Haurân. Some of them were three or even four stories high. Eleven or twelve feet was a common height for the ceiling in the first story, ten feet in the second, and in two or more cases the height in the third story was also ten feet. The doors of the rooms on the second floor, as well as on the first, were, as a rule, seven and a half or eight feet high. The rooms were not small, but spacious,—that is, spacious for private houses. A number of those that I measured were ten by twenty-five feet or twelve by twenty-four. There were, of course, both larger and smaller rooms than these. The roofs were supported by arches, and by increasing the number of these a long hall could be covered as well as a small apartment.

"A common style of building seems to have been a group of houses with a wide space around the outside and a large open



CHURCH AND CONVENT AT UM EL JEMAL.

court on the inside. These courts were fifty feet by seventy-five, and sometimes larger. Stone stairs on the outside of the houses, facing the court, led up to the second and third stories. Many of these are in as good condition as if they had been built but a year ago. There are no decided marks of great antiquity. In the large reservoir before mentioned there are some bevelled stones, with the fullest rough face. Very many of the stones of which the houses are built are simply split, and not faced at all; yet it should be observed that the splitting was remarkably regular. It was evidently at one time, and I should judge for a long time, a prominent Christian city. I found the remains of what I consider to have been three Christian churches. One of these at least had a portico, and columns were lying about the front of it. In no other

city east of the Jordan that I have visited do so many crosses appear on the lintels of the doors of private houses as here.

"Then, again, the inscriptions are by no means the least important fact connected with these ruins. M. Waddington has published several Greek and Latin inscriptions from this place, and during my visit I found seven others, which he has not given, besides several in the Nabathean language. Among those which M. Waddington has given I find that one is in honor of M. Aurelius Antoninus. Another shows that the troops or garrison stationed here were cavalry, belonging to the Ninth Dalmatian Horse, who were under the command of one Julius, an officer attached to the court of the prince. They formed a section of the body of troops known as Vexillarii — veterans upon whom was conferred special honor. Possibly a hint may be obtained as to the character of the place by the kind and rank of the soldiers that were assigned to it. This inscription belongs probably to A.D. 371.

"On the four faces of a square tower, belonging to a large building which may have been a monastery, are several inscriptions in Greek, chiefly of a religious nature. One is a fragment taken from the Twenty-first Psalm; others contain the names of Uriel, Gabriel, and Emmanuel. M. Waddington refers to the use of the names Uriel, Gabriel, Raphael, and Michael in the early Jewish writings. Four angels were placed at the corners of the throne of God, who were the genii of the four cardinal points. Uriel was the angel of the north, consequently his name appears on the north face of this tower. Gabriel is the name on the east face, and the edifice is put under the protection of these two angels. Among the Nabathean inscriptions is one from a monument dedicated to the god Dusares, who was extensively worshipped in these regions.

"The Arabs are every year carrying off the stones of this city to other places. As many as six men were at work while we were there, throwing down the walls and getting the long roof-stones, which were to be taken away on camels. Just before we reached the place we met thirty or forty camels that had started with loads of stone from these ruins. It is easy to see how important inscriptions may be carried off, and thus valuable historical material forever lost. This practice of removing stones from one place to another

has gone on for centuries. Indeed, it prevailed in Bible times; and we may be justified in concluding that the citizens of the Haurân possessed, in their day, much finer private houses than any which now appear among the ruins.

"The place appears to have been deserted for centuries. I should judge that the desertion was sudden and complete. There are no traces of there having been any lingering deteriorating remnant of people, or of any wretched subsequent inhabitants, to mutilate it, as is frequently the case in these large ruined cities. I noticed an interesting fact in regard to the pieces of pottery with which the surface of the ground here, as in all ruined towns, is covered. In most cases one sees only the red pottery, but in Um el Jemal the black was the prevailing kind, and the red decidedly the exception. There are but few places in Syria where the black pottery is made. In the first century, according to the Talmud, the black kind was considered superior to the red, and brought a much higher price in the markets; and what is also interesting in this connection, a certain town in Galilee had the monopoly of its manufacture.

"So far as I am at present aware, there are no means of knowing what the ancient name of this place was, or whether it corresponds to the 'Beth-gamul' of Jeremiah xlviii. 21–24. In the passage referred to, it is stated that 'judgment is come upon the plain country,' and in the list of eleven cities there specified, Beth-gamul, Beth-meon, Kerioth, and Bozrah are mentioned. 'Judgment is come,' it is said, 'upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near.' But it is not known how far the country designated extended. If Bozrah, in the passage in question, corresponds to the place where we now are [that is here at el Busrah], which is doubtful or at least has not yet been proved, then there would be no difficulty in making Um el Jemal, or 'Mother of the Camel,' correspond to Beth-gamul, or 'House of the Camel,' of Jeremiah.

"On our way back, as we had no guide, and paths do not exist, we took the wrong direction, and when we had ridden five hours we did not find our camp. We ascended a slight elevation, which commanded a view of a wide region. We had a choice of seven ruined cities, which were in sight from where we stood; but as night was rapidly approaching, even our effendi could not tell

which was el Busrah. We made a guess, which proved a lucky one, and after one hour and a half hard riding in the dark we reached our tents in safety. The color of the basalt rock of which these Haurân towns are constructed gives one at first the impression that they have been blackened by fire," and as they approached the ruins of el Busrah on that dark night, the black and broken walls of these deserted houses reminded Dr. Merrill of the burned portion of a large city after a great conflagration.[1]

As very few travellers have ever been to Um el Jemal, that account of Dr. Merrill's visit is invested with special interest, and I fully agree with him when he says that, if Bozrah corresponds to this el Busrah, "then there would be no difficulty in making Um el Jemal correspond to the Beth-gamul of Jeremiah;" but that has not yet been fully established.

September 22d.

We find ourselves this morning surrounded by a wilderness of ruins that sets all description at defiance. There seems to be neither beginning, middle, nor end to them, and one is at a loss to know where to commence his explorations.

That question is easily settled when you become acquainted with the plan of the city of Bozrah, the direction of the main streets, and the location of the principal buildings. The walls surrounding the ancient city were very thick, and their greatest length was from east to west. The space enclosed by them was more than a mile square, divided into four unequal parts by two main streets running north and south and east and west, which crossed each other near the middle of the southern part of the city. Other streets ran parallel to them, and the most important ruins are now found on the eastern side and towards the middle of the town. The black ruins of private houses are to be seen in all directions, mostly towards the south-east and south, their walls still standing, but the roofs have fallen in long ago.

There were extensive suburbs beyond the walls on the east, north, and west; but the most imposing, and in some respects the most interesting, structure now seen at Busrah is this great castle near which our tents are pitched. It occupies a commanding posi-

[1] East of the Jordan, pp. 79–87.

tion outside of the south wall of the city, and directly opposite to the principal street leading northward through the town. The commander of the Turkish garrison in the castle, who called upon us last night, has sent one of his soldiers to accompany us over the fortress, and we may as well commence our examination of the ruins at el Busrah by first visiting the castle and the remains of a Roman theatre within its walls.

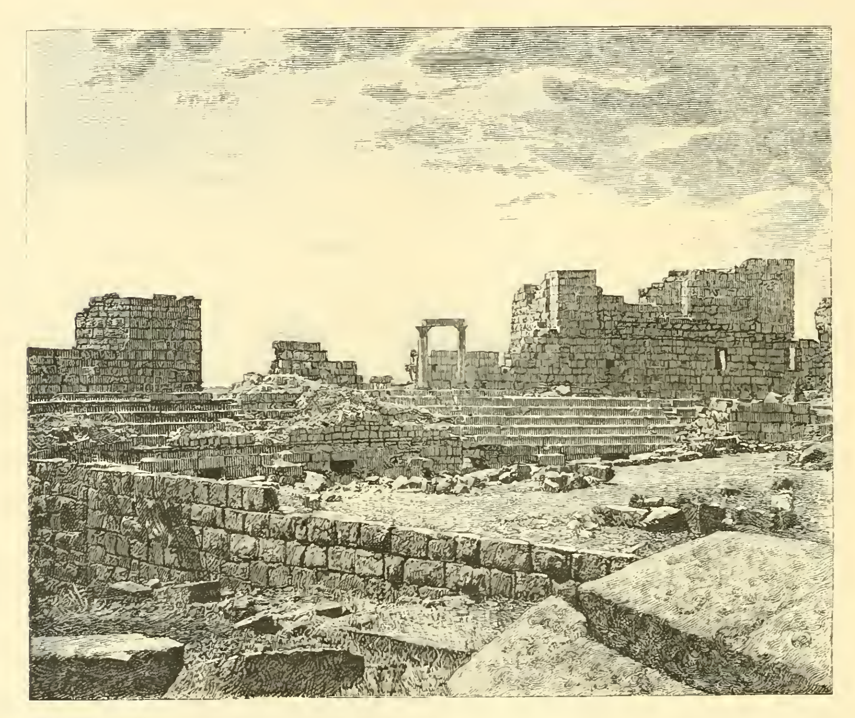
The only entrance to this strong fortress is through a large gate-way with an iron-plated door studded with nails. It is in a deep recess in a retired angle near the east end, and is reached by a causeway or bridge of six arches across the moat that surrounds the castle, and which could formerly be filled with water from the reservoir near by, with which it was connected by an aqueduct.

Look well to your footsteps as we grope our way up this dark and crooked staircase to the upper platform; and now we can explore the narrow passage-ways, mouldy, subterranean vaults, numerous chambers of different sizes, once used for various purposes, the courts, and the massive towers. The whole interior of the castle is in a ruinous condition, everywhere encumbered with heaps of rubbish, and beneath the vaults are large cisterns capable of containing a supply of water sufficient to last the garrison for many months. Some of these subterranean vaults, I suppose, were connected with the theatre. Others were made by the builders of the castle for store-rooms and stables, and the chambers in the upper stories were probably for the use of the garrison.

This was one of the largest and best-built castles in Syria, and its massive external walls are nearly perfect and evidently Saracenic. Its construction probably dates from early Muhammedan times, and in its present form it differs from all other castles in this country. Here, near the central part, it contains a large and well-preserved Roman theatre, certainly far more ancient than the castle which now includes it. I suppose the theatre was erected upon a tell or mound elevated about sixty feet above the surrounding country. When the Moslem conquerors wanted a castle at this central and important city of el Busrah, they availed themselves of this theatre as a nucleus, added strong towers at both the east and west ends, and walled in the front of the theatre, as we now see it. The

wonder is that the Muhammedans, who hold in utter abomination all such edifices, allowed this theatre to remain almost perfect, without attempting to remove or destroy it.

The theatre occupies a space upon this platform about two hundred and fifty feet long and two hundred feet wide. It was semicircular in shape, and supported by massive piers and groined



THEATRE WITHIN THE CASTLE AT EL BUSRAH.

arches. On either side of the stage, which was about one hundred and forty feet long and sixty feet wide, there was a large chamber sixty feet square, whose exterior wall was adorned with Doric pilasters. There were six tiers of seats, now partly covered up by Saracenic buildings, and a colonnade of nearly sixty Doric columns ran around and above the upper tier of seats, but most of them have disappeared. The theatre faced the north, and the audience not only witnessed the spectacle on the stage, but they could overlook the entire city in front and below them, and beyond it was the

wide-spreading plain of the Haurân, stretching far away northward to the foot-hills of Mount Hermon.

Before leaving this fortress let us ascend the tower at the north-west angle. From the top of it we can survey not only the extensive ruins of el Busrah, but also the surrounding country for many miles in all directions.

"The keep," says Dr. Porter. "is a huge square tower, rising high above the battlements [of the castle] and overlooking the plains of Bashan and Moab. From it I saw that Bozrah was in ancient times connected by a series of great highways with the leading cities and districts in Bashan and Arabia. They diverge from the city in straight lines, and my eye followed one after another until it disappeared in the far distance. One ran westward to the town of Ghusam and then to Edrei; another northward to Suweideh and Damascus; another north-west up among the mountains of Bashan; another to Kerioth; and another eastward, straight as an arrow, to the castle of Salchah, which crowned a conical hill on the horizon.

"Towns and villages appeared in every direction, thickly dotting the vast plain; a few of those to the north are inhabited, but all those southward have been deserted for centuries. I examined them long and carefully with my telescope, and their walls and houses appeared to be in even better preservation than those I had already visited." And among other ruined towns, he saw, from the top of this tower, Um el Jemal, the supposed Beth-gamul of the Scriptures. "The plain," he says, "extends to the horizon, and is rich and fertile; while the ruins prove that it was at one time densely populated. But the cities are 'without inhabitant,' the houses are 'without man,' the land is 'utterly desolate,' judgment has come upon it all far and near, and the whole of Bashan and Moab is one great fulfilled prophecy."[1]

Let us now descend from this lofty outlook, and examine some of the ancient edifices in the city whose ruins lie in such bewildering confusion almost at our feet. We need not stop to decipher the Greek inscriptions; they have been copied by Burckhardt, Waddington, and others. M. Waddington collected at el Busrah nearly sixty

[1] Bashan and its Giant Cities, pp. 68–70.

of them, some of great length, but most of them are brief and imperfect, and of no special historic value.

And now for our ramble amongst the ruins of ancient Bozrah. We will first visit those tall columns which stand out so conspicuously near the centre of the town. They occupy the opposite corners of the two main streets which divided the city nearly in the middle, one running from east to west, the other from north to south. These four columns on the left stand diagonally across the northwest corner of the street, but there is no trace of the structure to which they belonged, and without excavations it is impossible to determine the original plan and purpose of an edifice apparently occupying so unusual a position. The columns are about twelve feet in circumference and over forty-five feet in height. The capitals are perfect, but the entablature has fallen. These four beautiful columns are regarded as amongst the best specimens of the Corinthian order in Syria, and second only to the six columns in the peristyle of the temple of the sun at Ba'albek.

Those two lofty columns on the opposite, or north-east, corner of the street probably belonged to a colonnade or a temple, but only a part of the front wall remains standing, showing three tiers of niches, one above the other. These columns are too slender for their great height, being about nine feet in circumference and nearly fifty feet high, and they are otherwise not in the most perfect style of classic architecture. They stand at the ends of the edifice with which they were connected, on a base of white marble, and had Corinthian capitals. One of them still supports a profusely ornamented entablature which rests upon a pilaster in the front wall of the building.

If we followed the main street westward we would soon come to a large ruined structure, on the south side of it, which from its thick walls and vaulted chambers was probably a bath. A short distance beyond it, on the same side of the street, and facing north, is a well-preserved triumphal arch, partly concealed by the remains of private houses. It was about forty feet long and twenty feet wide, and had three arches, the central one of which was over forty feet high. At the sides and between the arches there are square pilasters, and niches for statues, and a vaulted passage-way led through under the

RUINED TEMPLES OR PUBLIC EDIFICES.



arches lengthwise. From a Latin inscription on one of the pilasters we learn that the triumphal arch was erected about the middle of the third century of our era in honor of Julius Julianus, prefect of the first Parthian Philippine legion.

Leaving these columns, and the ruins of the temple to which they belonged, let us now thread our way northward along this narrow street, which appears to have been occupied by shopkeepers whose little stalls were vaulted over, the arches in many cases resting on short columns. This proves that they are comparatively modern and consequently of no special interest. Our object in passing through this deserted bazaar, which, even in Muhammedan times, was the centre of extensive trade and traffic for several hundred years, is to visit the great mosk at el Busrah, said to have been built by order of the Khâlif 'Omar.

Here, on the left, are the ruins of the so-called Beit el Yehûdy, the house of the Jew. Nothing remains but the gate-way which once led into the dwelling-place of that peculiarly fortunate, but execrable, Israelite. Tradition affirms that he was deprived of his original habitation by the governor of el Busrah, who built a mosk upon the site. The Jew appealed to the Khâlif 'Omar at Medîna, who gave him an order written upon the jawbone of an ass, to this effect: "Pull down the mosk, and rebuild the house of the Jew." Consequently, he became "an execration, and an astonishment, and a reproach" to every true believer from that day to this.

We will now cross to the western side of the street, and enter the court of the great mosk. This small door, near the minaret at the north-east corner of the edifice, will lead us into the interior. Within, the mosk was nearly square, and the roof was supported by a colonnade that ran round the three sides north, west, and south, but on the east there was a double row of columns forming the porch or vestibule. Most of the columns are of well-polished white marble, with Corinthian capitals. They are all about eighteen feet in height, and the shafts consist of a single stone. Two of the columns have Ionic capitals, and some of the shafts are of green micaceous marble, a rare variety, of which there are but few specimens in this country. The basaltic columns in the colonnade are coarse, unpolished, and badly executed.

A beautiful frieze in stucco, and Cufic and Arabic inscriptions in bass-relief, ran round the walls on the interior of the mosk. Two of the marble columns have Greek inscriptions; one of them bears the date 383 of the Bostrian era, corresponding to A.D. 489, and the other contains the name of Christ. All the material of which this great mosk of the Khâlif 'Omar was constructed evidently belonged to more ancient edifices, and the columns were brought here from some Christian church or heathen temple.

We will not visit the ruined bath on the opposite side of the street, nor extend our walk to the east and north-east of it to visit the Deir and Dâr, the convent and the house of the monk Boheira. At the bath we would only find traces of the pipes that conducted the water into it, and upon the door of the "convent" and over that of the "house" we would see a Latin and a Greek inscription, neither of which is of any special importance. It may be well to mention, in passing, that the ruined walls and fallen roofs of those two buildings are probably those of a former church and chapel. The objects most worthy of notice in this vicinity are the cathedral of Busrah—called by the natives the church of the monk Boheira—and the Cufic inscription in the court of a small mosk near it. We can examine them on our way back to the tents, as they are but a short distance to the south-east of this mosk.

Who was the monk Boheira?

Burckhardt says: "This is a personage well known to the biographers of Mohammed, and many strange stories are related of him by the Mohammedans, in honor of their Prophet, or by the eastern Christians, in derision of the impostor. He is said to have been a rich Greek priest, settled at Boszra, and to have predicted the prophetic vocation of Mohammed, whom he saw, when a boy, passing with a caravan from Mecca to Damascus. According to the traditions of the Christians, he was a confidential counsellor of Mohammed in the compilation of the Koran."[1] It is supposed that Boheira accompanied the youthful Prophet to Mecca, and afterwards became his instructor, and that Muhammed derived from him that imperfect knowledge of the Bible which his absurd and puerile stories in the Koran so abundantly display.

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., p. 228.

The massive and circular interior of this cathedral affords us a grateful shelter from the hot wind. I have felt its enervating presence all the morning during our rambles among the ruins, and it appears to be increasing in violence every hour.

Such stifling sirocco winds, with clouds of suffocating dust, are not uncommon at this season of the year, and Busrah, situated on the verge of the Arabian desert, is entirely exposed to their full force and their irritating and debilitating effects. During a sirocco, therefore, men and animals seek refuge from the fierce wind and oppressive heat in the vaulted chambers, and behind the thick walls of these ruined edifices, and I am not surprised to see that those Bedawîn shepherds and their flocks have found safe shelter within the enclosure of this ancient cathedral.

They are certainly a startling illustration of the change that has come over place and people since this edifice was erected.

This Greek inscription, on the west side of it, over the main entrance, is still quite perfect, and from it we learn that the cathedral is one of the oldest in this region, that at Edhra' antedating it by about two years. M. Waddington has copied it, and, together with the text, he gives a brief account of the three martyrs, Sergius, Bacchus, and Leontius, in whose honor the church was built by the Archbishop Julianus in 407 of the Bostrian era, corresponding to A.D. 513. The cathedral was square externally and circular within. The walls are nearly perfect, but the domed roof has fallen, and the interior is encumbered with the débris. The altar was at the east end, and the apse was supported by short Corinthian columns with low arches. In the walls are several sculptured stones which must have belonged to a more ancient building. On either side of the entrance, and to the right and left of the chancel there are large niches, and the circular walls of the rotunda were adorned with many smaller niches and other architectural ornaments common to all Oriental churches in early Christian times.

M. Waddington gives the text of an inscription found at Busrah, in honor of the patriarch Job, and in his comments upon it he tells us that a very ancient tradition makes the neighborhood of this city the home of the patient man of Uz. He adds that Job was, and still is, the patron of hospitals, especially for lepers, and he sup-

poses that the inscription belonged to such an institution founded at Bozrah by the Emperor Justinian during the sixth century. It is certainly interesting to hear of a tradition associating the name of that ancient patriarch with this region—the supposed land of Uz.

In the court of that mosk, north of this cathedral, is the basaltic stone mentioned by Burckhardt, "covered with a long and beautiful Cufic inscription, which is well worth transporting to Europe; the characters being very small, it would require a whole day to copy it."[1] An excellent photograph of that inscription was secured by the gentlemen of the American Palestine Exploration Society when at el Busrah in the autumn of 1875, but I am not aware that any attempt has been made to ascertain its purport.

CUFIC INSCRIPTION AT EL BUSRAH.

Turning our steps southward from the cathedral, we will pass by the house of the sheikh of el Busrah on the right, and here, on the left, spanning the main street which ran through the city from east to west, is another triumphal arch, much smaller than the one farther west, and only remarkable for the thickness of its walls. South of this Roman arch is Kŭsr Melek el Asfar, the palace of the Yellow King. It is a large ruined house with several courts, strewn with sculptured stones and fragments of columns. Nothing is to

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., p. 232.

be seen in the south-eastern part of the town but the prostrate ruins of former habitations, so we will pass on, without further delay, to our tents near the castle.

September 22d. Evening.

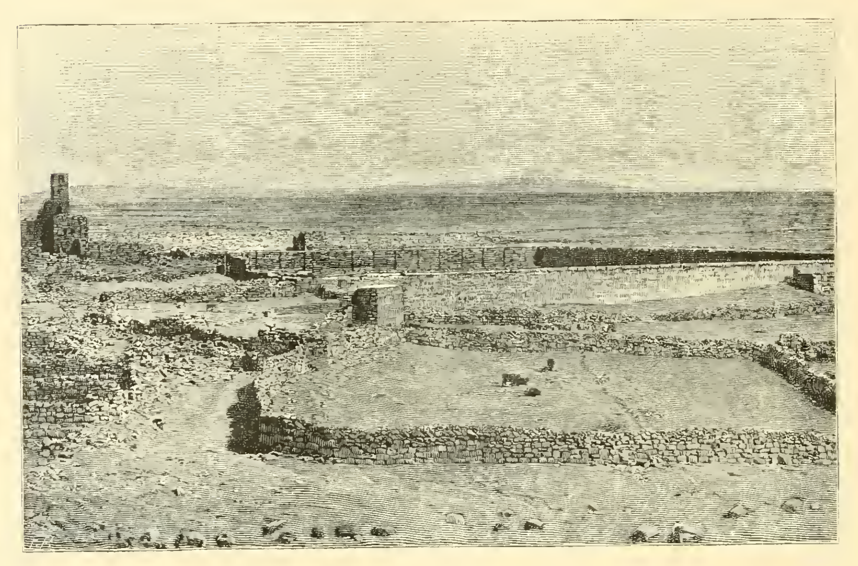
Here at Busrah the distances are so great, and the ruins over, under, and among which one must find or force his way are so confusing, that exploration is rendered particularly fatiguing.

Especially in such a prostrating sirocco as this. It is more than a mile from the east gate to Bâb el Hawa at the opposite or western end of the street, but that is the longest diameter of the city. The western half of the town appears to have been occupied principally by private dwellings, which are now entirely prostrate, and the only remarkable structure in that neighborhood is Bâb el Hawa, the Gate of the Wind. It consists of a well-preserved Roman arch, with shell-shaped niches and square pilasters on either side. Traces of the ancient pavement are still visible, but the gate-way is choked up with rubbish and hewn stones.

Outside the gate, on the north, there is a round tower, or guard-house, whose walls are in a ruinous condition. According to Burckhardt, the tower was built by Yûsuf Pasha, of Damascus, to command the springs called 'Aiyûn el Merj, which rise some distance to the north-west of it and within the walls of the town. But the pasha probably only repaired the old Roman guard-house. Near the springs is a meadow, and there appears to have been a small temple or nymphæum built over the fountain of el Jeheîr, a little stream which rises in that neighborhood. A large pedestal has recently been discovered near the city wall in that vicinity, with a Latin inscription dedicating it to "Antonia Fortunata, the wife of Antonius Cæsar." East of the springs are the ruins of a small mosk called el Khudr, the Moslem name for St. George, and near it are the remains of an old tomb.

It may well be that this city originally owed its existence to those springs and fountains both within and without the walls of the town, for such "a blessing" is rarely found in these regions. They, however, did not prove sufficient for the wants of el Busrah when it became the capital of the province of Arabia, else the community would never have constructed such large and expensive

reservoirs on the east side of the city. The one not far from our tents, and near the south-east corner of the city wall, is about five hundred feet long, four hundred feet wide, and even now over twenty feet deep. The surrounding walls are more than ten feet thick, and a staircase led down to the bottom. On the north and east sides of the reservoir there are remains of former habitations, and some public buildings, whose massive stone doors were nearly ten feet high and about a foot thick, and near the north-east angle is a ruined and deserted mosk with a dilapidated square minaret.



RESERVOIR AND RUINED MOSK AT EL BUSRAH.

Burckhardt supposes that "this reservoir is a work of the Saracens," intended for the use of the Moslem pilgrims, who as late as the seventeenth century passed by this city on their way to Mecca; but it appears to be ancient, and was probably constructed for the supply of the great mercantile caravans that made el Busrah one of their principal stations ages before the rise of Muhammedanism. Burckhardt is mistaken when he says that "the basin is never completely filled." I have seen the reservoir full to the brim, and the wavelets upon its surface, wafted by the wind, were like those on a small lake. Some distance farther north, on the east side of the

town and outside of the walls, is another reservoir, nearly four hundred feet square and fifteen feet deep. But heaps of rubbish encumber the sides and centre, and it is only remarkable for the number of "masons' marks" upon the stones in the walls. "These characters," says Dr. Merrill, "strongly resemble Aramaic letters of the seventh or eighth century before Christ."[1]

Is it not strange that so little is known about the ancient history of this great city, and that its claim to Biblical notice should be disputed by some modern critics?

Like everything else in these days, Busrah must submit to the scrutiny of enlightened and impartial criticism. The objections against its being the Bozrah mentioned by Jeremiah are, however, not convincing, though it is but fair to admit that there remains a certain degree of doubt with regard to the claims of this city to Biblical celebrity. It must not be confounded with the Bozrah referred to in the well-known passage, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah."[2] That place has been identified with el Busaireh, or Little Busrah, as its name implies, in the mountainous district to the south-east of the Dead Sea, and about eight miles south of Tŭfileh, the ancient Tophel.[3]

But as the Bozrah mentioned by Jeremiah is associated with Beth-gamul, supposed to be Um el Jemal, five hours to the south of this place, and also with Kerioth, identified with el Kureiyeh, a few miles east of el Busrah, and near the road to Sŭlkhad, the undoubted Salchah of the Bible, it is reasonable to believe that it may be the Bozrah intended by the prophet. The judgments of Jeremiah were against the Moabites, who appear to have been extremely haughty and arrogant. "We have heard of the pride of Moab (he is exceeding proud), his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart."[4] The Moabites were apparently rich and prosperous at that time, and there may have been flourishing colonies of them in Beth-gamul, in Kerioth, and in Bozrah. And the prophet assures them that the judgment of the Lord would overtake them wherever they dwelt; for it is come "upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near."[5]

[1] East of the Jordan, p. 55.
[2] Isa. lxiii. 1.
[3] Deut. i. 1.
[4] Jer. xlviii. 29.
[5] Jer. xlviii. 24.

He has certainly stretched out upon Bozrah or el Busrah "the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness."[1]

That prediction is far more literally fulfilled in the appalling desolation of this city than in the entire obliteration of its insignificant namesake of el Busaireh, to which the prophecy is now generally applied. But whatever may or may not be the facts in regard to the identity of el Busrah with the Biblical Bozrah, the historic notices of the Græco-Roman, Christian, and Moslem city are numerous and explicit enough.

Judas Maccabeus, previous to the conquest of this region by the Romans, in his expedition east of the Jordan, extricated great numbers of his brethren who "were shut up in Bosora, and Bosor, and Alema, Casphor, Maked, and Carnaim." And "he slew all the males [of Bosora] with the edge of the sword, and took all their spoils, and burned the city with fire."[2] A similar fate befell Carnaim, which is supposed to have been at Tell 'Ashtarah, north of Der'a. Judas took the city; slew the inhabitants, and burnt their temple. During the reign of the Emperor Trajan, and about A.D. 105, his general A. Cornelius Palma, then governor of Syria, conquered all this region east of the Jordan, and made Busrah the capital of the new Roman province, which was called Nova Trajana Bostra.

The Romans beautified the city, and adorned it with temples, theatres, baths, and other public edifices, and under them it became a military colony, and remained an important commercial centre for many centuries. They also made public highways extending in all directions, and especially eastward across the desert towards the valley of the Euphrates. One of those roads started from Bostra and, passing by Sŭlkhad, ran, it is said, in a straight line through the desert to the head of the Persian Gulf.

The so-called Bostrian era originated in this city about the commencement of the first century A.D., and after Bozrah had been constituted the metropolis of this part of Arabia; and it was extensively used upon the coins and inscriptions now found in the cities and towns east of the Jordan. Towards the middle of the third century, Philip the Arabian, a native of Bozrah, as is generally supposed, became Roman emperor, and, as was natural, he con-

[1] Isa. xxxiv. 11.

[2] I. Macc. v. 24-28, 42-44; Jos. Ant. xii. 8, 3, 4.

ferred many privileges upon his native city. There are, however, two other claimants in this region for the honor of being the birthplace of that Arabian emperor of Rome.



RUINS OF EL BUSRAH.

After the establishment of Christianity in the empire it was early introduced into Bozrah, and spread rapidly throughout all this region. The great Origen made a visit to Bozrah in order to restore to the orthodox faith the bishop Beryllus, who had taught certain speculations regarding the pre-existing nature of Christ, which were considered heretical. He presided over at least one of the councils held here, and his mission was entirely successful. This city became the seat of a metropolitan archbishop, after the time of Constantine, having dependent upon it a large number of

bishops scattered over the entire province of Northern Arabia, and Reland finds the names of several of its occupants in the lists of various ecclesiastical councils. At present there is not a single Christian family residing in el Busrah.

Previous to the Moslem era, or el Hegira, this city was frequented by trading caravans and merchants from Mecca and other places in western Arabia, and Muhammed himself visited it at least twice; once, when twelve years old, in company with his uncle, Abu Talib, when—if ever—he had his famous interview with the monk Boheira. Again, when twenty-five years old, he came hither in the employ of Khadîja, who eventually rewarded his mercantile success with her hand and fortune. After the subjugation of Arabia, and soon after the death of the Prophet of Islâm, a Muhammedan army attacked this city. The Moslems advanced under the leadership of the fierce and impetuous Khâlid, renowned as the Sword of God, and shouting the fanatical cry, "Fight, fight, victory or paradise!" they fell upon the Christians and drove them into the city.

The terrified inhabitants might have long resisted the Arabian hordes, but the town was betrayed by Romanus, the governor, who had been deposed from office, and who afterwards embraced the faith of Islâm. El Busrah was the first fortified city in Syria that fell by treachery into the hands of the Muhammedans, and from that day to this they have held uninterrupted possession of it. Under their baneful rule it has gradually dwindled down to its present insignificant condition, and only thirty or forty families of poor Moslem fellâhîn and Bedawîn shepherds now find shelter amidst the vast ruins of the Roman capital of Arabia.

Do you suppose that Sŭlkhad occupies the site of Salchah or Salcah, mentioned by Moses and Joshua in connection with the Hebrew conquests on this "side Jordan toward the sunrising?"

Almost nothing is known about the long history of Salcah, extending over a period of more than three thousand years, and some writers have not accepted the traditional identification, but I think their objections are based upon insufficient grounds. In "the story of the conquest" Moses says, "Then we turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og, the king of Bashan, came out against us, and we took all his cities and all Bashan unto Sal-

chah."[1] Joshua mentions Og as reigning in Salcah, and includes in his territory "all Bashan unto Salcah."[2] About one hundred and fifty years later we read that "the children of Gad dwelt in the land of Bashan unto Salcah."[3] These are all the Biblical notices, and from them we are justified in locating Salcah somewhere in this neighborhood, at the extreme eastern limit of the Hebrew territory on this side Jordan.

"The most striking feature of Sŭlkhad," says Dr. Merrill, "is its great castle, which, indeed, is one of the most prominent landmarks in all the Bashan plain. It is built in the mouth of an extinct crater, on a conical swell or rise composed of porous lava rock. The hill itself is three hundred feet high, and the rim of the crater consists of ashes and cinders, while near the foot of the mound the volcanic rock appears. As the crater is bowl-shaped, there is a deep natural moat entirely around the castle, and the fortress is approached by a bridge over this moat.

"The walls of the castle are from eighty to one hundred feet high. The interior is a perfect labyrinth of halls, galleries, chambers, and vaults, which are now in a very confused and ruined state. There is a long Arabic inscription here, and also several in Greek, and on the stones many masons' marks appear. There are a good many busts, lions, eagles, and other figures sculptured upon the walls. Near the gate [and on the exterior wall] are two colossal lions facing each other, and between them is a palm-tree. [The importance of Sŭlkhad] as a frontier fortress must always have been great, and there are good reasons for regarding it as the fortress captured by Judas Maccabeus after he had taken Bosora, the modern Busrah."[4]

The ancient town was on the eastern side of the mound, and is entirely hidden by it from view. In the early part of this century the place was quite deserted, owing principally to its lack of good water; but it has been gradually reoccupied, and it now has a considerable population composed mostly of Druses from the Lebanon. It was visited by Dr. Porter in 1854, and he has given a graphic description of the impression its deserted condition made upon his mind at that time. "On approaching Sŭlkhad," he says, "we rode

[1] Deut. iii. 1–10.

[2] Josh. xii. 5; xiii. 11.

[3] 1 Chron. v. 11.

[4] East of the Jordan, pp. 50, 53.

through an old cemetery, and then, passing the ruins of an ancient gate, entered the streets of the deserted city. The open doors, the empty houses, the rank grass and weeds, the long straggling brambles in the door-ways and windows formed a strange and impressive picture. Street after street we traversed, the tread of our horses



KULA'T SŬLKHAD—CASTLE OF SALCHAH.

awakening mournful echoes and startling the foxes from their dens in the palaces of Salcah. Reaching an open paved area, in front of the principal mosque, we committed our horses to the keeping of Mahmood, who tied them up, unslung his gun, and sat down to act the part of sentry, while we explored the city.

"The view [from the castle] is wide and wonderfully interest-

ing; it embraces the whole southern slopes of the mountains, which, though rocky, are covered from bottom to top with artificial terraces, and fields divided by [low stone walls or] fences. From their base the plain of Bashan stretches out on the west to Hermon; the plain of Moab on the south to the horizon; and the plain of Arabia on the east, beyond the range of vision. Wherever I turned my eyes, towns and villages were seen. Bozrah was there on its plain, twelve miles distant. The towers of Beth-gamul [Um el Jemal] were faintly visible far away on the horizon. To the south-east an ancient road runs straight across the plain far as the eye can see. From this one spot I saw upwards of thirty deserted towns! Well might I exclaim with the prophet, as I sat on the ruins of this great fortress and looked over that mournful scene of utter desolation, 'Judgment is come upon the plain country, upon Keriathaim, and upon Beth-gamul, and upon Kerioth, upon Bozrah, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far and near.'"[1]

The village of el Kureiyeh, in this neighborhood, is supposed to be the modern representative of the ancient Kerioth included in the judgment upon Beth-gamul, Bozrah, and all the other cities in the land of Moab, is it not?

When the identity of el Busrah and Um el Jemal themselves can be established with Bozrah and Beth-gamul, then it may fairly be inferred that el Kureiyeh is merely the Arabic form of the Hebrew Kerioth, and that both places are the same in name as well as in location. It appears to have been a doomed city in the time of Amos, for we read, "Thus saith the Lord, I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the palaces of Kirioth;" and besides the judgment pronounced upon it, nearly two hundred years later, by Jeremiah, that prophet informs us that "Kerioth is taken, and the strongholds [in Moab] are surprised."[2] But we know even less of its Biblical story than that of Salchah, and scarcely anything of its secular history.

The ruins at el Kureiyeh, though not important nor imposing, are quite extensive, and consist of several square towers, a large reservoir, the remains of a few public buildings, and many private

[1] Jer. xlviii. 21-24; Bashan and its Giant Cities, pp. 76, 77.

[2] Amos ii. 1, 2; Jer. xlviii. 41.

habitations, some of which have very thick walls and heavy stone doors. The reservoir is near the centre of the town, and was surrounded by a stone wall. Adjacent to it is a singular structure, with a portico consisting of three rows of columns, six in each row, supporting a flat roof. A broad flight of seven steps, extending the whole length of the portico, led from the first row of columns up to the third. From a Greek inscription on a stone upon one of the steps we learn that the reservoir was constructed during the second century of the Bostrian era, or about A.D. 296.

In the fourth century el Kureiyeh appears to have been the seat of a bishop in one of the ecclesiastical districts dependent upon Bozrah, and from its position on the confines of the eastern desert it must always have been a frontier town of considerable importance. Since the conquest of this part of the country by the Muhammedans, el Kureiyeh has dwindled into insignificance, and, like most of the ancient towns in the Haurân, it has often been entirely deserted. When Burckhardt visited it, only four of its seven or eight hundred houses were inhabited, but thirty years ago Dr. Porter spent a night at el Kureiyeh, and was hospitably entertained by the celebrated Druse sheikh Isma'îl el Atrash, who then resided in the place, and he found upward of one hundred houses occupied by at least as many Druse families.

XIV.

EL BUSRAH TO DER'A AND JERASH.

The Country between el Busrah and Jerash.—Plain of el Haurân.—Roman Road.—Boundary Line between Gilead and Bashan.—Few Villages.—Volcanic Waste.—Waving Wheat and Barley.—Broken Lava.—Remarkable History of the Haurân.—Migration of Abraham.—The Region West and East of the Jordan.—A Fierce Race.—The Rephaims, Zuzims, Emims, Horites.—The Invasions of Chedorlaomer.—March around the South End of the Dead Sea.—En-misphat.—Amalekites, Amorites.—Defeat of the Five Kings.—Capture of Sodom.—Lot carried away Captive.—Pursuit of Chedorlaomer by Abraham.—Night Attack.—Recovery of Lot and Restoration of the other Captives.—Melchizedek.—Salem, Jerusalem.—A March of about two thousand Miles.—Arrival of the Hebrews led by Moses.—Moabites, Ammonites, Amorites.—Sihon and Og.—Reuben, Gad, and the Half Tribe of Manasseh.—Captives in Mesopotamia.—Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians.—Alexander the Great.—The Ptolemies and the Seleucidæ.—The Romans.—Byzantines and Muhammedans.—Illustration of the Sacred Record by the Physical Features of the Country and the Manners and Customs of the People.—Ishmael.—The Promise to Hagar wonderfully fulfilled.—Ishmaelites.—Muhammedanism.—Ishmael the Ancestor of the Moslems.—Divine Predictions concerning the Descendants of Abraham.—The River Zeidy.—Ghŭsam.—Central Parts of Plains destitute of Villages.—Agricultural Hamlets.—Various Native Races.—Nebaioth, Nabatheans.—Caravan Trade between Arabia, India, and Africa.—Petra, Sellah.—The Nabatheans unconquered by the Persians, Greeks, or Romans.—Expedition of Ælius Gallus.—Ruin of the Nabatheans by the Abandonment of the Arabian Caravan Lines.—Aretas.—Paul.—Herod Antipas.—John the Baptist.—The Ghassanide.—Palmyra.—Zenobia.—Indigenous Tribes.—Roman Bridge over the Zeidy.—Traces of Chariot-wheels.—Et Taiyibeh.—Large Tower.—Um el Meiyâdin.—Volcanic Rock and Cretaceous Limestone.—Hill-sides aglow with red Anemones.—Villages.—Ghurs.—Camels carrying Wheat to Acre.—Caravan Route.—Company of Ishmaelites.—Balm of Gilead.—Joseph sold into Egypt.—Fanatical Moslems.—Turkish Firman.—M. Waddington.—The Capital City of Og.—The Hebrew Invasion and the Conquest of Bashan.—Edhr'a, Edrei.—Der'a, Adara.—The Onomasticon and the Peutinger Table.—Eusebius.—Muhammedan Conquest.—Situation of the Ancient Town and the Modern Village of Der'a.—Extensive Cemetery.—Prospect from Tell Kerak.—El Jaulân, Lake Huleh, and Mount Hermon.—Tell 'Ashtarah.—Ashteroth Karnaim.—

The principal Divinity of the Phœnicians.—Temple at Carnaim.—The Maccabees.—Atargatis.—Twenty-five Thousand slain at Carnaim.—Josephus.—The Onomasticon.—Eusebius.—Dr. Merrill's Description of Tell 'Ashtarah.—A strongly fortified Place.—Cyclopean Remains.—Massive Entrance.—Timotheus's defeated Army.—Large rock-cut Reservoir.—Roman Baths.—Aqueduct.—Mosk and square Tower.—Sarcophagus with Lion's Head.—Church and Monastery.—Remains of an ancient Structure.—Masons' Marks.—Three Cities, one beneath the other.—Dr. Wetzstein's Subterranean Residence of Og.—Crusaders at Der'a.—Ragged Arab Tents.—Bedawîn, Gypsies, and Vagabonds.—Fortune-telling.—Burning Straw.—Romping Children.—Abundant Harvests.—Blasted Plain.—Luxuriant Grass, waving Wheat, and brilliant Flowers.—Mountainous and wooded Region.—Cities of the Decapolis.—The Zeidy.—Cascades and Rapids.—Country east of the Jordan dotted with Villages, abandoned to the Bedawîn.—Dr. Merrill's Search for the ancient Golan.—Wady or Nahr 'Allan.—Beit er Râs, Capitolias.—Roman Road.—Ruins of Public Buildings and great Arches.—Corinthian and Ionic Columns.—Ornamental Work and fine Eagles.—Inscriptions.—Underground City.—Subterranean Dwellings.—Irbid.—Cyclopean Walls described by Dr. Merrill.—Substructures of strong Towers.—Arbela.—Beth-arbel.—Eidûn, Dion.—Haj Road.—Pilgrim Caravan to Mecca.—Burckhardt at Remtheh.—Last inhabited Village of the Haurân.—Cavernous Habitations at Remtheh.—Dr. Merrill's Experience at Remtheh.—No Water for Ten Hours.—Migration of the Wulid 'Aly.—"One hundred thousand Camels."—Contrivance for the Comfort of the Sheikhs' Wives.—The Ship of the Desert.—Bedawîn Migrations and Hebrew Invasions.—Distress of Moab.—Pasture and Provender for the Camels and Caravans of the Bedawîn.—Life of the wandering Ishmaelites.—Contempt for the Fellâhîn.—The Denizens of the Desert number Hundreds of Thousands.—Wooded Hills.—Hawarah.—Beautiful and Productive Region.—Tell Husn.—Ruined Castle.—Church and Columns.—Rock-cut Tombs.—El Husn.—No Fountains.—Dry Cisterns.—Greeks, Muhammedans, and Protestants.—No Distinction in Dress and Manners between the different Sects.—Freedom of Speech and Action.—Extensive Forest.—Mahneh.—Canon Tristram.—Biblical References to Mahanaim.—A Levitical City.—The Capital of Ish-bosheth.—The Refuge of David.—The Chamber over the Gate at Mahanaim.—David's Grief at the Death of Absalom.—A Station of Solomon's Purveyors.—Josephus.—Site of Mahanaim described by Modern Writers.—Beisân.—Suggestion of Dr. Porter and Conclusion of Dr. Merrill.—Jegar-sahadutha and Mizpah.—Galeed or Watch-tower.—Josephus.—The Land of Gilead.—Covenant between Laban and Jacob.—False Gods in the Family of Jacob.—The Call of Abraham.—Jacob at Mahanaim.—Jacob hideth the Strange Gods.—Worship of the True God at Beth-el.—Oppressive Heat.—Birket ed Deir.—Thousands of Flowers.—Cultivated Region.—Forest of Oak, Pine, Terebinth, and Hawthorn.—Um el Khanzîr.—Shepherds, Milk, and fine Flocks.—Ride through the Forest in the Land of Gilead.—Pine-trees.—Forest Fires.—Wheat amongst Blackened Stumps.—Wady ed Deir.—Camp amongst Olive-trees.—Village of es Sûf.—Jerash Deserted and Unsafe.

September 23d.

As Jerash—the most important place we wish to reach from here—is nearly south of el Busrah, why do we take this long

circuitous route of over seven hours to the north-west? We shall be farther, I suppose, from Jerash at Der'a, where you propose to spend the night, than we are now.

The country between el Busrah and Jerash is an uninhabited desert—a no man's land—over which roam only bands of lawless Bedawîn. Even caravans rarely venture to cross it, and we must necessarily take this route to get round it. But the time will not be lost; our course will take us across the plain of el Haurân, at its broadest part, and will make us better acquainted with it than otherwise we should have been. The old Roman road, also, which we shall follow for some distance, is not without interest, especially because it passes near the boundary-line between Bashan and Gilead, the two great districts into which the region east of the Jordan was divided in ancient times.

Those names are familiar to readers of the Bible, and the fact that we shall have both districts in view will relieve the monotony of our ride through this dreary region. Der'a, also, I suppose, occupies the site of an old town, and must be well worth visiting for its own sake. There seem to be very few villages along the road, and none of any importance, and the plain is apparently as bare and lifeless as the desert itself.

The crops have all been gathered in, and the surface now presents only a dry volcanic waste; but when the autumn rains commence, the whole aspect of this vast plain of el Haurân will quickly change, as if by magic, to a brilliant green. Pass this way in the spring, and you will find it a boundless expanse of waving wheat and barley, promising abundant harvests a few months later.

I notice that the ground is everywhere strewn with fragments of broken lava in countless numbers, but they are not large enough, evidently, to injure the crops.

They do not interfere with the growth of the grain, and the yield is as great here as in those central portions of the plain where the soil is composed of dark volcanic ashes. Desolate and forlorn as most of the Haurân is at present, it has been connected with some remarkable events, originating in the earliest historic times of which there is any authentic record. Our acquaintance with the country west of the Jordan begins with the arrival of Abraham at

Shechem. But previous to his migration from Haran to Canaan the region east of that river was inhabited by a fierce race of men divided into several tribes, who may have dwelt in this part of the country from remote antiquity, and long before the invasions of Chedorlaomer and his confederate kings.

From the fourteenth chapter of Genesis we learn the names of various tribes who then occupied this land. The Rephaims dwelt in Ashteroth Karnaim, a place probably at or near Tell 'Ashtarah, which we shall see this evening from the hill above Der'a. A people called the Zuzims lived in Ham, wherever that may have been; the Emims dwelt in Shaveh Kiriathaim, "and the Horites in their mount Seir, unto El-paran." Chedorlaomer and his confederate kings extended his invasion as far south at least as the Dead Sea, including Sodom and its associate cities. Twelve years the inhabitants submitted, and then they rebelled against their foreign conquerors. In the fourteenth year after Chedorlaomer's first invasion he returned, "and the kings that were with him," to quell the rebellion and re-impose his own authority.

Chedorlaomer smote all those tribes, and continued his victorious march around the south end of the Dead Sea and out into the wilderness, and then "returned and came to En-misphat which is Kadesh," where Moses, four centuries later, encamped when he sent the spies to explore the land of Canaan. Having subdued the Amalekites in that region, Chedorlaomer led his army back homeward along the west side of the Dead Sea, "and smote the Amorites that dwelt in Hazezon-tamar" or En-gedi. From that place he proceeded to attack the kings of the five cities of the plain, captured Sodom, and carried away the inhabitants, including Lot, the nephew of Abraham. Continuing his march northward, up the valley of the Jordan, Chedorlaomer was overtaken by Abraham and the "three hundred and eighteen trained servants, born in his own house," and utterly defeated at Dan, under Mount Hermon.

It was a night attack, and Abraham smote the host of Chedorlaomer "and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left of Damascus." Having recovered Lot, Abraham returned and restored the other captives to the king of Sodom, and he was blessed by Melchizedek, "the priest of the most high God," who reigned in

righteousness and peace at Salem—generally supposed to be Jerusalem. Thus ended one of the first military expeditions of which there is any detailed account in authentic history. Including the more distant countries over which Chedorlaomer and the confederate kings reigned, their invasion of this region, "beyond Jordan, eastward," from the distant valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates, implies a march of about one thousand miles — an extraordinary undertaking for that early day, and one that could only have been achieved by the despotic ruler of a nation with a stable government and a well-appointed military organization.

What occurred here during the four succeeding centuries after that invasion can be partly inferred, or imagined, from the condition of the country when the Hebrews, led by Moses through the wilderness east of Moab, arrived from Ezion-gaber, "and pitched in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo." The old inhabitants had all disappeared; we hear no more of the Zuzims, the Emims, and the Horites. Instead of them the names of new races and tribes occur: Moabites dwelt on the high plateau east of the Dead Sea, and Ammonites had possession of the region around the head-waters of the Jabbok, while the warlike Amorites occupied the central parts of the country between them, with Sihon, their king, on the south, and Og, king of Bashan, on the north.

Those two kings were destroyed by the Hebrews, and their territory divided between Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. They, in their turn, were harassed and gradually overcome by the Syrians of Damascus, and ultimately carried away captive to Mesopotamia by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Persians. After them came Alexander the Great and the Græco-Macedonians, and the Ptolemies and the Seleucidæ held possession of the country down to the advent of the all-conquering Romans, shortly before the beginning of our era. Their Byzantine successors maintained a feeble and doubtful sway over the land until the early part of the seventh century, when the fierce and fanatical Muhammedans from Arabia swept them away, and overran the entire country east of the Jordan; and they have held it ever since, to its utter ruin and entire demoralization.

In glancing thus briefly at the various races, tribes, and nation-

alities that have occupied this region during the four thousand years and more of the past, we do not depart from the main purpose of our travels. In no other way can some of the ancient records in the sacred volume be so strikingly verified and illustrated as by studying the physical features of this country and the manners and customs, the laws and religions of the people who once occupied it, and compare them with the regions we pass through and the inhabitants of the land as we see them to-day.

The latter are the direct, remote, or collateral descendants of Abraham and the other patriarchs mentioned in the Bible, and they still dwell in the regions originally assigned to them in those early historic times. Ishmael, the son of Hagar, the Egyptian bondwoman, was the first-born to Abraham, and in regard to him the promise of the Lord made to his outcast mother has been most wonderfully fulfilled: — "I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."[1]

One hundred and forty years after the invasion of Chedorlaomer we find that the Ishmaelites had greatly multiplied and had spread over the southern desert, "from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt," according to the promise.[2] And there they are to this day, possessing the special characteristics of their great ancestor, following the same mode of life, dwelling in tents, wearing the same kind of garments, and speaking substantially the same language. Muhammedanism, which crushed out of existence so many other races and tribes between the upper and nether millstone of its sanguinary creed, has effected no essential change among the Ishmaelites during the past twelve centuries of Moslem domination. In some important respects it has not only perpetuated their peculiar traits but contributed greatly to the expansion of the race itself.

Do you include the followers of the Arabian Prophet in that multitude of Ishmael's descendants that could not be numbered?

Without accepting the Muhammedan legends in regard to the founding of Mecca and the erection of the Caaba by Abraham and his son Ishmael, still the fact remains that the Muhammedans claim

[1] Gen. xvi. 10, 12.

[2] Gen. xxv. 18.

Ishmael as their remote ancestor and profess to be Ishmaelites, inheriting the religion of Abraham, with its promises and blessings included; and in their long and varied career they have exhibited the very same characteristic traits ascribed to Ishmael. Their hand, also, has been against every man, and every man's hand against them, and yet they still dwell in the presence of all their brethren, in the centre of the Old World, a defiance and a menace to the surrounding nations whether pagan or Christian.

The promise to Hagar thus expanded is, to say the least, very suggestive and exceedingly impressive.

It would be easy to show that the divine predictions concerning the other descendants of Abraham and the patriarchs—the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites—were remarkably fulfilled, both as to their homes in these regions and to their rapid extension and multiplication; but we may have occasion to resume this subject when we come to the lands which were occupied by those people; and though these and kindred topics are quite appropriate to the country through which we are journeying we must not be so absorbed in subjects far away as not to notice the objects of interest that lie along our present pathway.

I have been wanting, for the last half hour, to inquire the name of the river on our right and of the pretty village upon its bank.

The river is called Nahr ez Zeidy, and it drains the country west of the Lejah and most of the slopes of Jebel Haurân to the north-east of el Busrah. We crossed it on the bridge near Jemŭrrîn, half an hour north of el Busrah, and shall soon cross it again. The name of the village is Ghŭsam, and it, no doubt, occupies the site of an ancient town, as shown by the ruins of some large buildings—the remains of a church and the existence of high gates with massive stone doors. There are many other hamlets near by and far away on the plain, but there is nothing remarkable about them.

We have noticed before this that the central parts of such plains were generally destitute of large villages, important ruins, or ancient monuments, and at this day we see around us only small agricultural hamlets, the homes of the peasants who cultivate the fields adjacent to their habitations. But it is important to remember that there has always been an indestructible, native element in the population

of this region. Various native races and tribes have existed here from remotest times, and they survived the tide of foreign nationalities that ebbed and flowed around them down to the last centuries before our era. The most celebrated native tribes, in times comparatively modern, were the Nabathean and the Ghassanide.

Who were the Nabatheans? We hear of them in this region, and have seen their inscriptions in some of the places we have visited during our journey south of Damascus.

They are supposed to have been the descendants of Ishmael's eldest son, Nebaioth, and were originally a nomad tribe—a pastoral people much like the Bedawîn Arabs of the eastern desert. They appear to have occupied Northern Arabia, and probably extended from the lower valley of the Euphrates and the shore of the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea and the confines of Egypt. Eventually most of the Nabatheans seem to have abandoned tent-life and built towns and cities. They became actively engaged in commerce, and for many centuries almost the entire trade between Arabia, India, and Eastern Africa was carried on by their countless caravans—north to Syria, east to the Persian Gulf, west to Gaza and Egypt, and southward through Central Arabia to the Indian Ocean. The celebrated Petra — the Sellah, probably, of the Bible — was their capital and the centre of their trade and traffic.

They became wealthy, civilized, and powerful, able to defend themselves against foreign enemies — whether Persians, Greeks, or Romans—nor were they ever effectually conquered by them. The Persian invaders were always defeated, and the only Roman expedition into their dominions—that of Ælius Gallus, in the time of Augustus—was an utter failure. A more insidious enemy, however, against which the unconquerable deserts could not protect the Nabatheans, ultimately overpowered the entire race. They grew great and wealthy through commerce alone, and when that failed they succumbed and sunk into insignificance. The Græco-Roman merchants discovered that the passage through the Gulf of Suez and Egypt was shorter, cheaper, and safer for Oriental commerce, and thus the Elanitic branch of the Red Sea was forsaken, and the Arabian caravan lines of trade were abandoned.

Some of the Nabathean princes rose to high station and were

recognized as kings even by Roman emperors, and one is mentioned under the title of Aretas as early as the reign of Antiochus.[1]

Was the Aretas whose governor "kept the city [of Damascus] with a garrison, desirous to apprehend" Paul, a Nabathean?[2]

No doubt, and probably he was the same Aretas whose daughter, married to Herod Antipas, was divorced by him at the instigation of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. To avenge that insult to his daughter, Aretas declared war against Herod and utterly defeated him — a calamity which, Josephus says, was generally regarded by the Jews as a judgment upon Herod for the murder of John the Baptist, whom he beheaded to please the vindictive Herodias.[3]

The Ghassanide were of Arabian origin, mostly immigrants from the central and western parts of the peninsula. They settled along the southern and eastern borders of Syria, and finally spread over the desert to the valley of the Euphrates. They were divided into many distinct tribes, some of which became civilized and occupied large and flourishing cities. We need only instance Palmyra and its noble queen, Zenobia, who belonged to the Ghassanide people. At one time they professed Christianity and built numerous monasteries, but the irruption of the Muhammedans into this country ultimately extinguished the Ghassanide dynasty, and their name and fame ceased to appear in Arabian history. Similar indigenous tribes, however, still exist, and we may come in contact with them as we penetrate farther into the region east of the Jordan which they claim as their special domain.

We are now approaching the bridge over the Zeidy, and as it is about midway between el Busrah and Der'a we will rest there and take our lunch in the shade near its eastern buttress.

The river seems sluggish and not very deep.

I have passed this way in early spring, and the Zeidy was quite unfordable. This bridge, of two arches, is broad and substantial and apparently Roman. The traces of chariot-wheels on the stone pavement establish its claim to a certain antiquity, for no wheeled vehicles have passed over it, I suppose, for many a century.

That village on the south is called et Taiyibeh, and farther west you can see a large tower, which gives the name of Um el Mei-

[1] 2 Macc. v. 8. [2] 2 Cor. xi. 32. [3] Ant. xviii. 5, 2; Matt. xiv. 3–12.

yâdin—Mother of Minarets—to the village near it. The nature of the country from here to Der'a changes from level to hilly, and from volcanic rock to cretaceous limestone. In the spring the hill-sides are all aglow with red anemones and other flowers, bright and gay; now they are burned and brown under the scorching rays of the sun during the rainless months of summer.

As usual, villages increase on the hills that border the plain, and more life and activity are manifest among the inhabitants.

In this valley into which we are now descending, south of that village called Ghurs, I once found a large caravan of camels that were carrying wheat to Acre. The caravan had stopped here to rest, and the camels were allowed to brouse upon the luxuriant pasture. The men were asleep on the ground by the side of the loads, and I was reminded, by their appearance and the road they were travelling, that this had been a caravan route from remote antiquity. They would descend into the profound gorge of the Jarmuk and cross the Jordan on the bridge called Jisr el Mejami'a, the only one now available south of the Lake of Tiberias. Thence they would pass westward through the plain of Esdraelon to their destination at Acre. It was probably by this route that the "company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt," to whom Joseph was sold by his cruel brethren.[1] The road to Egypt then left the plain of Esdraelon at Dothan, as it does still.

We have been making a rapid descent towards the Zeidy, and that village on the hill beyond it must be Der'a, which we have come to visit. It occupies a very commanding position.

We shall find our tents at the south-eastern extremity of the town, where I spent a Sabbath many years ago. The inhabitants are rude, fanatical Moslems, and it was not easy to find a suitable place to encamp. No one would allow us to pitch in any of their fields, and we were obliged to apply to the sheikh in the name of the Sultân, whose Turkish firman we had with us for just such emergencies. With evident reluctance and disgust he pointed out a vacant spot which we then found quiet and well protected. There is time enough to make the circuit of the place before it grows

[1] Gen. xxxvii. 25–28.

dark, and in the evening we will look into the history of the old town and its surroundings.

Der'a, September 23d. Evening.

Der'a is a much larger place, and there are more remains of antiquity about it than I had expected to find.

You are aware that M. Waddington and others have maintained that this is the true site of the Biblical Edrei in which Og, the king of Bashan, dwelt when the children of Israel invaded his territory, in the time of Moses. But it appears to be improbable that Og would locate his capital upon a hill in the open country, on the south-west border of his kingdom, at a place that could be so easily surrounded and captured, when his dominions extended over all Bashan, including "the region of Argob" or the Lejah, with its bewildering labyrinths and extensive caverns.

The Israelites came up from the south, and Og probably retired before them to a town in the natural fortresses of the Lejah, and there, as we have seen, are the ruins of a large and ancient city, at Edhr'a—a name almost identical with the Biblical Edrei. But there are no data, either in the Bible or elsewhere, sufficiently explicit to settle that question. Der'a, however, is undoubtedly the Adara of the Onomasticon and the Peutinger Table, said to have been twenty-four miles from Bosrah; and it was probably regarded by Eusebius as the Edrei of the Bible. After the Muhammedans conquered the country, in the early part of the seventh century, Der'a is no longer mentioned as an important place, and has no special history down to the present day.

The ancient town was situated upon a hill in a bend—almost a loop—of the river Zeidy, but the modern village occupies only a small part of the former site. Including the hill just north of the village, the circuit of the old town must have been more than three miles. On a former occasion I had a long ramble about the place, accompanied by the son of the sheikh. We went first to an extensive cemetery, the largest I have seen in this region—a perfect wilderness of Muhammedan tombstones. We next ascended the hill, which was once fortified, and the whole surface is covered by the débris of a city apparently of great antiquity.

The prospect from Tell Kerak, as the hill is called, over the sur-

rounding country is very extensive. I could see with my glass most of those lofty, conical tells which form so striking a feature of the plateau of the Jaulân, east and south-east of Lake Huleh, with snow-capped Hermon, in all his glory, for background on the north —a panorama of great interest, and as vast as it was varied. On the plain below us, which stretches north and east to the horizon, are numerous tells, each with a significant name, but the one which chiefly attracted my attention was Tell 'Ashtarah. It is nearly north, and apparently about ten or twelve miles distant.

Is it supposed to occupy the site of the city where the Rephaim dwelt in the time of Abraham?[1]

As already remarked in the account of Chedorlaomer's invasions, a place called Ashteroth Karnaim existed in this region at that very early day, and it is supposed to be identical with Ashtaroth mentioned in Deuteronomy, Joshua, and elsewhere as a city in Bashan and not far from Edrei. If Tell 'Ashtarah could be identified with both Ashtaroths it would impart additional interest to that site; but aside from the similarity in name and location, the Biblical and other notices of the two places are not sufficiently decisive. We hear no more of Ashteroth Karnaim until the time of the Maccabees. Ashtoreth was the principal female divinity of the Phœnicians, and her worship prevailed over Western Asia. A temple dedicated to her, apparently, at Ashteroth Karnaim was well known in later Hebrew times, and both the city, then called Carnaim, and the temple are mentioned in Maccabees: Judas Maccabeus "took the city, and burnt the temple with all that were therein."[2]

The same achievement is referred to in 2 Maccabees, where the temple is called that of Atargatis—another name for Ashtoreth—and the number of the slain, in both city and temple, is said to have been twenty-five thousand.[3] Josephus also mentions the exploits of Judas at Carnaim, the capture of the city, the slaughter of his enemies, and the burning of the temple.[4] In the Onomasticon Ashteroth Karnaim is said to be six miles from Edrei, by which Eusebius must have meant this Der'a, for Edhr'a, or Edrei, in the Lejah is much farther from Tell 'Ashtarah.

[1] Gen. xiv. 5.
[2] 1 Macc. v. 26, 42–44.
[3] 2 Macc. xii. 21, 26.
[4] Ant. xii. 8, 4.

Dr. Merrill carefully examined that interesting site. "The summit of the mound," he says, "is one thousand nine hundred feet above the sea-level, sixty or more above the surrounding plain, and is longer from north to south than from east to west. There is an irregular depression on the summit, running from north-east to south-west, which divides it into two portions. It is very probable that this depression was much more marked in ancient times than at present. The remains of the wall around the brow of the summit we examined with care, and the indications are that it has been a strongly fortified place.

"On the south-west side of the hill there still exist some cyclopean remains of great interest. These consist chiefly of two lines [of walls] formed of immense, unhewn blocks of stone, starting from a point in the plain about twenty-five yards from the base of the hill, and running thence to the base and up the side of the mound, till they meet the wall, already mentioned, around the summit. At the point in the plain where we have said these walls commence, they turn towards each other at right angles, and space is left for a great gate. This gate and passage may have served as the entrance to a castle; and if the massiveness of the entrance affords any hint as to the character of the place, it must have been one of unusual strength. Being fortified, it is the only place in all that immediate region whither a defeated army would flee, as is related of Timotheus's army in 1 Maccabees, 5, and there is no objection to regarding it [that is, Tell 'Ashtarah] as the Carnaim of those times."[1]

Descending from Tell Kerak we came to a large reservoir between it and the village. It was excavated in the solid rock, and is about five hundred feet long, two hundred feet wide, and now partially filled up with rubbish, but originally it may have been fifty feet deep. Near the south-west corner of the reservoir are the remains of ancient baths, probably Roman. I was told that the reservoir is called Birket Siknâny, because of the echoes made by the walls. That "birkeh" is now dry, but it was formerly filled by an aqueduct that was carried over the river gorge on a bridge. The bridge, of four arches, is seen below Tell Kerak, and a line of what appears to have been an aqueduct, which the natives call Kanâtir

[1] East of the Jordan, pp. 329, 330.

Far'aun—the Arches of Pharaoh—stretches across the plain beyond it towards the north-east for several miles.

Returning through the village towards the south-east we tried to enter the mosk, whose tall, square tower forms such a conspicuous object in the general view of the place, but it was closed, and we could only look into the large court from a terrace above it. The mosk is about one hundred and fifty feet long and one hundred feet wide, with three gates, and a double colonnade of many short columns ran around it. In the north-east corner of the court is a remarkable sarcophagus, adorned with the heads of lions and other decorations in bass-relief. The mosk was built out of the ruins of a church and monastery, and just south of it are the solid foundations of a semicircular structure, probably the apse of the church. The chord is nearly one hundred and twenty feet, and the edifice, which faced the north, was divided into aisles by columns and piers.

At the south-eastern border of the village are the remains of an ancient structure, which are well worth examining; but the fragments have been built into modern houses, and large pieces of the cornice are scattered about in utter confusion, so that it is impossible to make out the plan of the edifice. The son of the sheikh said that there were many inscriptions on the walls of native houses, and led the way through narrow, crooked, and filthy lanes to show them; but they were all mere masons' marks, consisting of a single letter, cut into the face of stones which probably belonged to the houses of the old city. I noticed, however, that some of those marks were found on large, unhewn blocks of stone. That Der'a must have been an important city in the Græco-Roman times no one can doubt who examines the existing remains.

Dr. Merrill remarks that "Dra'a ought to be a rich field for excavations, because at least three cities exist there, one beneath another," and he translates Dr. J. G. Wetzstein's "interesting account of his visit to the extensive underground dwellings which exist here," and which Dr. Wetzstein calls "the subterranean labyrinthine residence of Og," king of Bashan.[1] But neither Dr. Wetzstein nor M. Waddington found any important inscriptions, and Dr. Merrill, who recently attempted to explore that subterranean city, was not

[1] East of the Jordan, pp. 349–352.

more successful than either of the others. Dr. Merrill relates the historical fact "that when King Baldwin III. (1144–1162) and his crusaders made their wild chase to Bozrah, they went by way of Dra'a. The weather was hot, and the army was suffering terribly for want of water; but as often as they let down their buckets, by means of ropes, into the cisterns here, men concealed on the inside of the cisterns would cut the ropes and thus defeat their efforts. Probably the underground city has connection with all the important cisterns of the place."[1]

Der'a, September 24th.

We have a ride of ten hours before us to-day from Der'a to the village of Sûf, near Jerash, where we are to spend the night.

I am surprised to see around the outskirts of this village so many ragged Arab tents, with occupants equally ragged.

They belong to remnants of indigent Bedawîn tribes, roving gypsies and Mograbian vagabonds, who gather about such places to beg and to steal. When we were here before, a Mograbian woman came to the tents one afternoon and offered to tell our fortunes and perform sundry tricks of legerdemain. She was the only one of that people I have seen in this region who could speak Arabic like a native of the country.

What is the cause of those clouds of black smoke that float down the hill-side towards the river?

The shiftless natives are trying to get rid of the great heaps of old straw and manure that overtop their houses by burning instead of carrying them out onto the fields. It is the usual custom, and they were doing the same thing when I was here years ago. Then some small boys and naked children were romping in the smouldering mass until they became nearly as black as the ashes they were tossing about in their rude sport. Such great mounds of refuse straw and chaff show that the wheat-fields around Der'a are very extensive and yield abundant harvests.

The direction of our ride appears to be nearly south-west, and the first village we shall pass through, you say, is Remtheh?

It is an hour and a half brisk riding from Der'a, and at this season of the year the brown and blasted plain, which we must

[1] East of the Jordan, p. 352.

traverse to reach it, is a dreary and desolate waste. But I have passed this way in the spring, when those swelling uplands and broad fields were covered with luxuriant grass and waving with green wheat, and these rugged hill-sides were fairly glowing with thousands of red anemones, scarlet ranunculuses, and other gay and brilliant flowers, presenting a beautiful appearance.

The country between our line of travel and the valley of the Jordan northward and westward is wild and mountainous, and in some parts it is well wooded with noble oak forests. It is the region of the ancient Decapolis, and all but one—Scythopolis—of the ten confederate cities were on this side of the Jordan. The list includes Hippos, identified with Fîk; Gadara, the modern Um Keis; Pella, Tŭbŭkat Fahil; Capitolias, or Beit er Râs; Damascus; Canatha, Kŭnawât; Gerasa, or Jerash; Dion, probably Eidûn; Philadelphia, 'Ammân; and Raphana, which has not yet been identified. There are several other sites of Biblical and historic interest, such as Irbid, the ancient Arbela; Ibl, the Abila of Peræa; and el Mahneh, possibly the Mahanaim where Jacob was met by the angels.

The Zeidy, after passing around the north side of Der'a, makes a tremendous descent, by a succession of cascades and frequent rapids, of more than two thousand feet in twenty miles down to where it joins the river Jarmuk, and thence onward to the Jordan. Numerous tributaries from the north and east find their way into it through profound gorges, which render that region and that around the Jarmuk north of it among the wildest and most picturesque east of the Jordan. Much of the land, however, is capable of cultivation, and in ancient times it appears to have been dotted over with villages and towns. At present it is mostly abandoned to the Bedawîn, and large tracts are literally without settled inhabitants.

Dr. Merrill has made several excursions through different parts of it. One of them was from Fîk, the Aphek of the Bible, above the south end of Lake Tiberias, northward to Nowa, and thence southward to el Mezârîb, Tell 'Ashtarah, Der'a, el Husn, and 'Ain Jenneh in Wady 'Ajlûn. In the first day's ride he was searching for the ancient Golan, and though he could discover no site bearing that name, he found a "Wady or Nahr 'Allan" in the region where the city of Golan was probably situated. As in the case of

Wady Yabis and Jabesh-gilead, Dr. Merrill suggests that the name Gollan is preserved in that of Wady or Nahr 'Allan—an identification which may be accepted as sufficiently probable so far as the mere name and locality are concerned.[1]

Some fifteen miles, nearly west, of Der'a is Beit er Râs, supposed to mark the site of Capitolias. Dr. Merrill, who visited it also, says that "it occupies the slopes and summits of two or three low hills, and extends far to the east on the line of the Roman road [between it and Um Keis, or Gadara] which is still quite perfect. The public buildings were numerous and imposing, but are now mere piles of ruins. Great arches exist here, also columns, Corinthian and Ionic capitals, a vast amount of carved ornamental work, and large, fine eagles, still perfect, whose wings spread three feet. There are also some inscriptions [one Nabathean, the rest Greek] among the ruins. The road leading east was lined with columns, and the building-material was chiefly basalt rock. Evidently a great deal of the old city is underground, for twelve fine arches in succession could be traced which are below the surface, and indeed people live in these underground apartments. This place has a special interest, because it was one of the cities which belonged to the Decapolis."[2]

About an hour south of Beit er Râs is Irbid, now a small village on the south side of a large tell or mound, upon which are the ruins of a castle. "There are here fine Roman ruins and some evident marks of great antiquity," Dr. Merrill says; "the cyclopean walls about this hill are a great curiosity. They are relics of an ancient people who once occupied this region, and as but few of them exist east of the Jordan valley, they are on that account all the more interesting. These here are formed, for the most part, of bowlders laid into walls. In one section I counted five courses, which reached altogether a height of twelve or fifteen feet, and elsewhere I counted three courses which reached nearly the same height. In a few places the walls are formed of great blocks of unhewn stone instead of bowlders, and these vary from ten to eighteen feet in length and are of proportionate width and thickness.

"At certain points large foundations project from the main wall,

[1] East of the Jordan, pp. 325, 326.

[2] East of the Jordan, pp. 297, 298.

in at least one or two cases for sixty feet. These are evidently the substructures of strong towers. It is in these foundations that the largest stones appear. The most perfect section of this ancient wall is at present on the east side of the mound, and extends unbroken for over three hundred feet."[1] The Græco-Roman name of that place is supposed to have been Arbela. There was a city of the same name—the Beth-arbel of Hosea and the Arbela of Josephus—north-west of Tiberias and near Kŭrûn Hattin, whose ruins are believed to be at a place also called Irbid.

"A little less than one hour south of Irbid, in the midst of a fertile tract well supplied with water, is a large double village with ruins, called Eidûn," which, Dr. Merrill is confident, "should be regarded as the 'Dion' or 'Dium' of the Decapolis."[2]

That large, wretched village on the hill-side ahead of us is er Remtheh, and I call your attention to the Haj road which passes below it, with its many well-beaten parallel tracks made by the great pilgrim caravan on its weary way to Mecca. In former times the Haj road passed by el Busrah, but for many years since it has kept along the western side of the Haurân, and from el Mezârîb it leads through the hill country west of Der'a, and thence trending to the south-east reaches Remtheh and passes on over the plain to Kŭl'at ez Zerka, near one of the sources of the Jabbok.

Burckhardt spent a night at Remtheh on his way to Jerash, and he thus speaks of its inhabitants: "We met with a very indifferent reception at the sheikh's house, for the inhabitants of the villages on the Hadj route exceed all others in fanaticism; an old man was particularly severe in his animadversions on Kafers [infidels] treading the sacred earth which leads to the Kaabe, and the youngsters echoed his insulting language. I found means, however, to show the old man a penknife which I carried in my pocket, and made him a present of it before he could ask it of me; we then became as great friends as we had been enemies, and his behaviour induced a like change in the others towards me. Remtha is the last inhabited village on this side of the Haurân; the greater part of its houses are built against the caverns with which this calcareous country abounds, so that the rock forms the back of the house

[1] East of the Jordan, p. 294.

[2] East of the Jordan, p. 298.

while the other sides are enclosed by a semicircular mud wall whose extremities touch the rock." [1]

We have no occasion to visit those cavernous habitations, or subject ourselves to the insolence of their fanatical inmates. We must not neglect, however, to fill our "water bottles" and to give drink to our horses, for there is no water to be found at this season of the year between this and Sûf. Dr. Merrill says that "the water at Remtheh was very poor, and had it not been for some friendly Turkish soldiers, who aided us in obtaining it, we should have had none at all. The morning of the day that we left this place for Jerash our animals had no water, nor did they or ourselves have any until near sunset, although our march was about eight hours for ourselves and about ten for our mules, and the thermometer was 87° in the shade.

"When at last we found water it was a dirty, stagnant pool, hardly eight feet in diameter. Our animals were frantic and entirely unmanageable until, having crowded and almost tumbled over each other in their efforts to reach the water, they had quenched what must have been their burning thirst. Then came our turn. We all drank freely. I fancied I never before was so heartily thankful for any blessing as for the two or three glasses of the muddy, dirty stuff which I drank here. But half an hour beyond this place [or pool], and only a few minutes from Jerash, we found a small spring of cool, fresh, delicious water, where, of course, we drank again." [2]

When passing through this region on a former occasion our party beheld a sight never to be forgotten—one, indeed, worthy of a long journey to witness. Some time before reaching Remtheh our curiosity was excited by the appearance of a great caravan, extending, in an unbroken line, from south-east to north-west, farther than the eye could reach in either direction. On coming up to it we found that the Wuld or Wulid 'Aly, a branch of the 'Anazeh tribe of Bedawîn, were upon their annual spring migration to the Haurân, and subsequently to el Jaulân and the region south of Damascus. Their camels, mostly accompanied by young ones of various ages, seemed innumerable. The sheikh of the tribe, surrounded by several horsemen, took up a position on the hill-side to overlook the

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., p. 247. [2] East of the Jordan, p. 101.

march of the caravan, and he assured us that they had one hundred thousand camels—no doubt a great exaggeration. We stood on the hill and watched the countless numbers pass by for more than an hour, and they came on eight or ten abreast, and with a steady and rapid march, many thousands of them, old and young.

The men and larger boys were on foot, but the women and children were perched upon the camels. Most of them were seated on the ordinary rough, wooden saddle, but there were many extraordinary contrivances for the comfort and protection of the wives of the various sheikhs. The one in common use was made of two slabs, or planks of wood, about ten feet in length, which were fastened upon the frame of the saddle and at right angles to it. From the ends of those slabs ropes were stretched over upright posts fixed above the middle of the saddle, to support an awning under which the women sat upon quilts and cushions. The swinging gait of the camels gave to those curious tents an undulatory motion like that of small boats on the ruffled surface of the sea. The camel, you know, is called "the ship of the desert," and those extraordinary contrivances certainly gave a new meaning to the adage.

The migration of such a formidable host, or caravan, of Bedawîn Arabs must be quite alarming to the agricultural population.

No cultivated country can bear them. I was reminded at the time of the distress of Moab because of the invasion of his territory by the children of Israel. No wonder that he said "unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field."[1] Those Wulid 'Aly Bedawîn followed the Haj road as far as I could see them with my glass, and north-west of Der'a they would spread themselves over the districts of el Jaulân and el Jeidûr up to the southern foot-hills of Hermon, where they would find pasture during the summer. In the autumn they would retire again to their winter-quarters in the great desert that stretches away eastward towards the valley of the Euphrates and the head of the Persian Gulf.

How can sufficient food be found for so many mouths?

The camels of the Bedawîn furnish an important part of it, and one object of those annual migrations is to procure wheat and other

[1] Numb. xxii. 4.

necessaries upon which those "children of the East" subsist, and which they take with them to their home in the desert. A strange life is that of the wandering Ishmaelites! Yet they glory in it, and look down with contempt upon the poor fellâhîn who dwell in houses and till the soil. We greatly underrate the number of those denizens of the desert. The 'Anazeh alone spread over Northern Arabia and the regions between Syria and the valley of the Euphrates, and must amount to several hundred thousand.

Since leaving Remtheh we have been riding over wooded hills for two hours, without meeting a single wayfarer or seeing a human habitation, nor even a deserted village.

There is a miserable hamlet ahead of us, situated on the plain, called Hawârah, but with nothing attractive about it. The surrounding country, however, is beautiful, and if properly cultivated much of the soil would no doubt be productive. It was covered with rich pasture when I passed this way in the spring. We must now turn southward towards the village of el Husn, the capital of this large district of Belâd Beni 'Obeid.

What is there to be seen at that place?

Husn means castle, and the most remarkable thing about the village is a large and lofty mound, called Tell Husn, the summit of which is overspread with the débris of a Saracenic castle, probably built upon the site of a far more ancient fortress. There are remains of an old wall surrounding the top of the hill, and at the south-western base of the mound are a few ordinary columns, but without capitals or anything about them to indicate the character of the edifice to which they belonged. In the village are also a few short columns connected with a ruined church afterward transformed into a mosk, but now deserted. Besides great stones, fragments of pottery, and other ancient remains found in all directions, numerous rock-cut tombs in the village and its neighborhood indicate that el Husn occupies the site of a very old city.

The village extends along the side of a hill which slopes eastward towards a wady that passes around the south end of it and then turns westward and descends into the Jordan valley. There are no fountains in el Husn, and the inhabitants depend for water entirely upon cisterns. Those are always exhausted in the latter part of

summer, and water has then to be brought from a long distance. Of the seventy or eighty families that reside at el Husn two-thirds are Christians belonging to the orthodox Greek Church, the rest are Muhammedans. A considerable number of the Christians had declared themselves Protestants not long before I was there, and had placed themselves under the care of the English mission at es Salt. In appearance, dress, manners, and occupations there is no apparent distinction between the different sects—and the same may be said of all the fellâhîn in this region—nor do the Moslems assume any superiority over the Christians in their general intercourse. During a quarrel the latter will not hesitate to curse and even beat the former—a freedom of speech and action not indulged in by the inhabitants of any part of the country except those on Lebanon.

We will follow a road over the hills, a little to the east of el Husn, by which we shall the sooner reach the friendly shelter of the great forest which extends from it quite to Jerash and indeed far beyond. About five hours from el Husn, in a south-westerly direction, and two hours north-east from Kŭl'at er Rubad, according to Dr. Merrill, is a ruin called Mahneh, in a wady of the same name, which, some have supposed, marks the site of Mahanaim, where Jacob met the angels after parting with Laban.

It is certainly remarkable that a place so distinguished in the history of the patriarch, and subsequently in that of Ish-bosheth and David, should be entirely lost.

And almost equally strange that the name, or one nearly identical with it, should be found, after so many centuries, clinging to such a featureless locality as that of Mahneh is said to be. Yet Canon Tristram, who visited the place, says, "There is every probability that the name of Mahanaim has been preserved in Mahneh, and that these grass-grown mounds represent all that is left of the capital of Ish-bosheth and the refuge of David."[1] From the Biblical narrative, in Genesis and elsewhere, Mahanaim appears to have been north of the Jabbok and east of the Jordan, within the territory of Gad and near the border of the half tribe of Manasseh.[2]

It was a Levitical city after the time of Jacob, and the fortified

[1] Land of Israel, pp. 487, 488.

[2] Gen. xxxii. 1, 2; Josh. xiii. 24, 26, 29, 30.

capital of a district, perhaps, in the days of Ish-bosheth and David.[1] It was to Mahanaim that David fled from before Absalom, and seated there "between the two gates" of the city they brought him "tidings" of the death of his son after the battle in "the wood of Ephraim."[2] And it was "to the chamber over the gate" at Mahanaim that David went up, "and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"[3] After that memorable day Mahanaim is mentioned but once in the Bible, and then merely as a station of one of Solomon's twelve purveyors.[4]

The incidental notices of Mahanaim by Josephus furnish no additional particulars regarding the location of that city, and the site is but vaguely referred to by more recent writers as lying about half a day's journey nearly due east of Beth-shean or Beisân, which seems to be much too far north of the Jabbok. Dr. Porter suggests the possibility that Jerash may be the true site of Mahanaim, and Dr. Merrill concludes that "if any existing ruin in the Jordan valley, or in the foot-hills bordering on it, is to be chosen as the site of Mahanaim, Khirbet Suleikhat perhaps answers the conditions better than any other."[5] It is possible that future research will yet bring to light some place between the Jordan valley, the ruins of Jerash, and in the neighborhood of Wady Mahneh, that will prove to be the real site of the lost city of Mahanaim.

Laban called the place where the covenant between him and Jacob was made Jegar-sahadutha and Mizpah, "for he said, The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another."[6] But Jacob called it Galeed, the meaning in both cases being that of a witness or watch-tower. Josephus tells us that "they erected a pillar [upon certain mountains] in the form of an altar, whence that hill is called Gilead; and from thence they call that land the land of Gilead at this day."[7] Whether we attach any importance to that explanation or not, it is sufficiently certain that we are now passing through the region of Mount Gilead where those remarkable events occurred, and that fact imparts peculiar interest to our ride.

[1] 1 Chron. vi. 64, 80; 2 Sam. ii. 8, 12, 29; xvii. 24, 27; 1 Kings ii. 8.
[2] 2 Sam. xviii. 24, 31, 32.
[3] 2 Sam. xviii. 33.
[4] 1 Kings iv. 14.
[5] East of the Jordan, p. 438.
[6] Gen. xxxi. 47, 49.
[7] Ant. i. 19, 11.

Is there reason to believe that the covenant between Laban and Jacob was held to have been permanently binding upon the descendants of the contracting parties?

It was a formal and final separation between the members of the Abrahamic family and the original race from which they sprang; and they never afterwards intermingled, nor were there any more intermarriages between them. It would appear strange that a mere family compact should have received such an extended description in the Biblical record, could we not discover in that covenant a higher and more important significance. Laban's entire tribe were then idolaters, and the family of Jacob had been led astray and already worshipped the same false gods.

Rachel, the favorite wife of the patriarch, stole the images of her father's gods and brought them with her in their flight; and had Jacob's family remained in Padan-aram they would, in all probability, have apostatized from the true God. Thus the divine purpose in the call of Abraham, the leaving of his kindred and his migration into Canaan, would have been frustrated. The breaking off of all intercourse, therefore, with the Mesopotamian branch of his race had become absolutely necessary for the preservation of Jacob's descendants from lapsing into the worship of idols.

Nor was that flight of Jacob sufficient of itself to effect the all-important result. The wonderful experiences of Jacob at Mahanaim and at Peniel had no doubt greatly quickened the religious life in Israel himself, but the Mesopotamian idols were still in his family. When, however, a second migration had become necessary soon after, in consequence of the cruel and treacherous slaughter of the people of Shechem by Simeon and Levi, Jacob took advantage of that occasion to exterminate from his family those abominable idols and their worship. "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem."[1] "Jacob and all the people that were with him [went up to Beth-el, and there he dwelt] and built an altar," and

[1] Gen. xxxv. 2, 4.

established the worship of the God of his fathers, at the place where "God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother."[1] Thus was the great reformation completely effected, and we hear no more of that kind of idolatry in the household of Israel.

We have now reached the regular road from el Husn to Sûf and Jerash, and will have the shade of this noble forest of oak, pine, and other trees for the rest of our ride.

There is not a breath of air in these thick woods, and the heat is most oppressive both to ourselves and our weary animals.

Very different, indeed, is this stifling atmosphere from that in April, when our party came direct from el Husn to Birket ed Deir, which we have just passed on our right. Then it was a wide pool, where we watered our horses and gathered some of the thousands of flowers that overspread and glorified the hills in all directions. Now the pool is dry, the hill-sides are blasted, and even the grass has disappeared. Up to this point—an hour and a half from el Husn —much of the country is cultivated, but from this on to Sûf the forest is uninterrupted, and is composed mostly of evergreen oaks, interspersed occasionally with pine, terebinths, and hawthorn.

In another hour we shall reach a very large pool called Um el Khanzîr—Mother of the Hog or Boar—but which might with more propriety be named Mother of Goats, for it was surrounded by many flocks of them in the spring. There we lunched, and the shepherds brought us plenty of fresh milk. Those were the only animals we found in the woods, and I never saw more beautiful flocks in any other part of the country—goats black as the raven, with clean limbs, long, pendent ears, and large, liquid eyes. We need not turn aside to visit that pool, for it is now empty, dry, and solitary.

From Um el Khanzîr to Sûf is nearly two hours, and in spring nothing can be more delightful than a ride through these forests, the grandest in this land of Gilead; and we need not wonder at the encomiums lavished by all travellers that have passed this way on the beautiful woodland scenery of these regions, for even the most enthusiastic have not said enough in its praise.

I notice that pine-trees are becoming more numerous, and the grove on our left has apparently been swept by an extensive fire.

[1] Gen. xxxv. 6, 7.

Such fires are not always accidental. When going from Jerash to 'Ajlûn I saw a part of the forest which had evidently been burnt over by the peasants in order to clear the ground for cultivation; and young wheat was springing up vigorously amongst the blackened stumps of the trees—very much like what is often seen in the far West in our own country—and I have no doubt that large tracts of Mount Gilead might thus be brought under profitable cultivation.

Our road begins to descend southward towards Wady ed Deir, having a high, wooded hill on the left and a more open country on the right, and in half an hour we shall reach our place of encampment amongst the olive-trees on the west side of Sûf.

As Jerash is only an hour farther on, why do we camp at this miserable village instead of near the ruins at that place?

Jerash is entirely deserted, and only robbers and one or two millers are found there. And though travellers have become more numerous in these days, and the danger less, our muleteers would be very reluctant to take their animals and encamp amongst the prostrate columns and solitary remains of that remarkable city.

XV.

JERASH TO 'AJLÛN, AND ES SALT.

The Sheikh of Sûf.—Experience of Canon Tristram and his Party.—The 'Adwân levy a Fine on the Sheikh of Sûf.—Remains of Antiquity at Sûf.—Stream in Wady ed Deir.—Olive-trees and Woods of Oak and Pine.—Muzâr Abu Bekr.—Old Coins for Sale.—Broken Sarcophagi.—Cemetery of Ancient Gerasa.—Entering Jerash through a Breach in the Wall.—General Survey of the City.—Seil Jerash.—The Site and the City of Jerash.—Remains of Private Houses and Public Buildings beyond the City Gate.—The Triumphal Arch.—The Emperor Trajan.—The Stadium.—Naval Combats.—The City Gate.—Ruins of a beautiful Temple.—Remains of a large Theatre.—Grand Colonnade of the Forum.—Fifty-five Columns still standing.—The Main Street lined with Columns.—The Pavement and the Ruts made by Chariot-wheels.—Side Street, Gate in the West Wall, Bridge across the Stream.—Pedestals for Colossal Statues.—Sections of the Colonnade along the Main Street.—The Apse of a Beautiful Building.—Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.—Side Street and Bridge.—The Propylæum.—Antoninus Pius.—Temple of Jupiter or of the Sun.—Earthquake Shocks.—Burckhardt.—The City Wall, small Temple, and Church.—Rows of Prostrate Columns and others still standing with their Entablatures.—Square Pedestals covered with a low Dome.—Portico of a Theatre.—Ruined Theatre designed for Gladiatorial Combats.—Northern Gate of the City.—Guard-house.—Street Pavement.—Groups of Columns with Ionic Capitals.—Ruins of a Bath with Columns in Front.—Aqueduct.—'Ain Jerwân.—Original Site of Jerash.—Great Clumps of Oleander.—Ruins on the Eastern Side of the Stream.—Temple and Church.—Spring and Aqueduct.—Bridge and Bath.—Jerash a City of Columns.—Not mentioned in the Bible and almost unknown to History.—Dr. Porter.—Mahanaim.—Dr. Merrill.—Ramoth-gilead.—Gerasa.—Josephus.—Alexander Jannæus.—A City of the Decapolis.—Gerasa burnt by the Jews and captured by Vespasian.—Gerasa a flourishing City for half a Century.—The Seat of a Bishop.—No Trace of Muhammedan Work or Worship.—William of Tyre.—The Crusaders.—Jerash deserted in the Thirteenth Century.—Trading Caravans and Mercantile Stations.—Ezion-geber.—Petra.—Palmyra.—A Store-city of Solomon.—The Nabatheans.—Superior Skill and Enterprise of the Greeks and Romans.—Western Civilization and Classic Taste.—The stately Forum and the luxuriant Bath.—Decline of Commerce and Abandonment of the Græco-Roman Cities East of the Jordan.—Prophecy translated into History.—The Lord's Sacrifice in Bozrah.—Fulfilment of Prophecy.—The Olive Groves of Sûf and the Oak Woods of Jebel 'Ajlûn.—Dr. Eli Smith.—Luxuriant Pasture and brilliant Wild Flowers.—'Aîn Jenneh.—The Walnut and Olive.—Great Variety of Fruit-trees.

—Large Fountains and Abundance of Water.—Evening Ride through venerable Oak Forests.—Jebel 'Ajlûn.—"The Land of Gilead."—Jacob and Laban.—Mizpah and Galeed.—Mahanaim.—Shechem and the Damieh Ford.—Wady 'Ajlûn and the Jordan Valley.—A Present of Sheep and Goats, Camels and Cattle for Esau.—Meeting between Esau and Jacob.—Interview between Joseph and his Brethren.—Peniel.—City and Tower at Penuel.—Gideon.—Jeroboam built a Palace at Penuel.—Josephus.—Dr. Merrill locates Penuel at Tellûl edh Dhahab.—The Hills of Gold.—Canaan's Ford.—The Wood of Ephraim.—"A Great Oak" with "Thick Boughs."—The Death of Absalom and the Biblical Narrative of the Battle.—Kŭl'at er Rŭbŭd.—Outlook from the Fortress.—From Hermon to Hebron, and from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, while Jordan rolls between.—Famous Historical Events.—From Chedorlaomer to David.—Elijah and Elisha.—From Judas Maccabeus to Herod the Great.—The Baptist and the Redeemer.—The Moat and Foundations of Kŭl'at er Rŭbŭd.—Indications of a more ancient Fortress.—The present Castle.—Saladin.—The Crusaders.—Abulfeda.—A singular Transposition of Names.—The Village of 'Ajlûn.—Modern Chapel and Old Mosk.—Unsafe Region between 'Ajlûn and es Salt.—Villages on the Plain of the Ghôr and upon the Hills of Samaria.—Sunken Channel of the Jordan.—Kefrenjy.—The Course of the Jabbok through the Plain to the Jordan.—Dr. Merrill.—Succoth and Tell Deir 'Alla.—Jacob encamped in Wady Fâri'a.—'Ain Thaluth.—Khirbet Thaluth.—Indications of former Cultivation.—'Ain Um el Jâlûd.—El Khŭdr, St. George.—Dibbîn, et Tekitty, and Reimûn.—Um el Jauzeh.—Limestone Strata.—Dense Oak Woods.—Kŭsr Nejdeh.—Captain Warren.—Tropical Climate.—Fruit-trees and Flowers.—Burmeh.—Olive Groves.—Sandstone Formation.—The Zerka in Spring and Summer.—Luxuriant Wild Oats and thriving Clover.—Impenetrable Thickets of tall Oleander.—The Ford of the Christian Woman.—Visit from the Sheikh of a Bedawîn Encampment.—Bulls of Bashan.—Bedawîn Boys and Girls.—Bakhshîsh.—Gorge of the Zerka.—El Belka and Jebel 'Ajlûn.—Sihon and Og.—The Zerka or Blue River.—Wooded Heights and Fertile Plain of the Belka.—Waving Wheat and Barley, and Wild Flowers bright and gay.—Clumps of Oak and Pine trees.—Many Birds and large Coveys of Partridges.—'Ain 'Allân.—Green Fig-trees.—Khirbet 'Allân.—Sîhân.—Khirbet ez Zî.—Neby Osh'a.—Pilgrims and Votive Offerings.—Sacrifice and Feasting.—Annual Fair.—Es Salt a Commercial Centre.—The Prophet Hosea.—Elijah and Joshua.—Outlook from Jebel Osh'a described by Dr. Merrill.—From Mount Hermon to the Dead Sea.—Jebel Osh'a and Mount Nebo.—The Spot where Moses stood.

Es Sûf, September 25th.

CONTRARY to my expectations, we have had no occasion to complain as others have of the behavior of the Moslem inhabitants of this village during the past night.

Travellers have often been annoyed by their fanatical insolence and by the importunate attempts of the sheikh, a notorious scamp, to levy black-mail upon them, and once I had no little difficulty in bringing him to reason. He was determined that we should not visit Jerash at all unless we paid a large bakhshîsh. Then, as now,

I finally convinced him that we were able to take care of ourselves and could dispense with his services as protector and guide.

Canon Tristram and his party were insulted, threatened, and nearly robbed here. They were compelled to pay an exorbitant sum before they were allowed to leave, and had to abandon all idea of visiting Jerash. Subsequently, however, under the protection of the 'Adwân Arabs, they were more successful, and Sheikh 'Abd el 'Azîz, with a strong party, recovered the money, levied, as a fine, the sheikh's best cow, and brought him and his friends under compulsion to be their guards to Pella, whither the 'Adwân could not accompany them.[1] The village has not improved in any respect during the last fifty years, and there are no remains of antiquity about it with the exception of a ruined square building, a few broken columns, and one or two Greek inscriptions almost illegible.

Let us now start for Jerash, where we shall spend a day of unusual interest amongst the wonderful ruins of that once splendid city. The site is about four miles to the south-east of Sûf, and the road to it winds along the west bank of this stream in Wady ed Deir, and around the heads of shallow valleys, amongst olive-trees and through straggling woods of pine, oak, and evergreen bushes, for nearly an hour to Muzâr Abu Bekr, a Moslem saint's tomb.

These people coming out to the road to meet us are some of the temporary occupants of the Muzâr, and they offer a few old coins for sale, but none of them are of any special value. From Abu Bekr there is a long and steep descent of about a mile to the north wall of the city. On the left of the road and not far from the city wall are many sarcophagi—upwards of fifty—scattered, as you see, far and wide over the hill-side. The inscriptions upon them, and the sculptured festoons and genii in bass-relief, have been nearly obliterated and defaced; but careful search and excavation might bring to light some interesting relics of a by-gone age, for that must have been the cemetery of ancient Gerasa.

We have now entered Jerash through this breach in the wall, near the north-west corner, and from here we can take a general survey of this once beautiful city: groups of columns standing around the fallen walls of ancient temples; shapeless ruins of private

[1] Land of Israel, p. 567.

dwellings, and massive remains of great theatres; the main street, with a long double colonnade, terminating at the southern end in the forum, with its grand circle of a hundred columns or more; the triumphal arch near the entrance to the town from the south, and the crumbling walls of the city with their ruined towers and shattered battlements--these are some of the principal features which strike the beholder as he gazes upon this wonderful picture of ruin and desolation. But the little stream, called Seil Jerash, that winds through the town with its foaming rapids and rocky banks fringed with green oleanders in full bloom, imparts life and beauty to the scene and relieves the dreariness of this deserted city.

For the purpose of examining these ancient edifices in consecutive order and to the greatest advantage, let us make our way southward, as best we can, over great masses of ruins half concealed by tall grass and rank weeds, to the triumphal arch about a quarter of a mile beyond the city gate in that direction.

Jerash was almost surrounded by mountains, and was built upon uneven ground on both sides of the shallow valley called Wady ed Deir. The walls, nearly eight feet thick, enclosed an irregular area about a mile square, which was divided into two unequal parts by Seil Jerash, the purling stream that flows southward through the valley on its way to join the Zerka—the ancient Jabbok—some distance below the town. The principal part of the city was on the western side of the stream, and most of the important edifices stood upon the rising ground on the west of the main street. The remains of private houses and public buildings extend for some distance beyond the city gate, but the only ruins of importance are those of the stadium, or race-course, and these of this triumphal arch which we have now reached and from whence we will start northward on our tour of inspection through the city.

In thus approaching Jerash from the south, this structure is the most imposing and the first to claim our attention. The Bedawîn Arabs call it Bâb 'Ammân, because the road from Jerash to that city passed by or through it. The entire gate-way was about eighty feet wide and forty feet high, and consisted of a central arch thirty feet in height, and two smaller side arches with rectangular niches for statues above them. On the front or south side are four Corinthian

semicolumns, occupying the spaces between the arches; but portions of the shafts, all their capitals, and the frieze and cornice of the structure have fallen. The remarkable and unusual feature about



TRIUMPHAL ARCH AT JERASH.

those columns is the vase-shaped pedestal of acanthus leaves above their bases, supposed to indicate that this triple gate-way is not older than the time of the Emperor Trajan.

Near the triumphal arch, to the left of the roadway and between that structure and the gate of the city, is the stadium or race-course. It was about three hundred feet wide and seven hundred feet long, considerably depressed below the surface, had steps or seats, and was semicircular at its northern end. The canal that passes along its eastern side seems to indicate that it was sometimes filled with water from Seil Jerash, and used for the purpose of representing naval combats. Proceeding northward we soon reach the city gate, a triple entrance resembling the triumphal arch, and originally con-

nected with the massive walls of the town. It is now blocked up by great heaps of fallen stones, and rendered almost impassable.

On the left, as we enter the city, are the remains of a beautiful temple, which stood, fronting the north-east, upon a large mound overlooking the main street and commanding a fine view of the greater part of the town. This temple was surrounded by Corinthian columns, only one of which—at the south-east angle—remains standing, and the portico was composed of two rows of columns, eight in each row. The portal was about fifteen feet broad, and the walls were nearly eight feet thick. The temple was fifty feet wide, and seventy feet long, and the walls had square pilasters with a plain cornice on



TEMPLE AT JERASH.



THEATRE AT JERASH.

the inside, and a row of six rectangular niches with round arches for statues on the outside. The roof, the front and rear of the temple, a portion of the side walls, especially on the west, and all the columns, appear to have been thrown down by an earthquake, and the ruins—heaps of stones, fragments of the frieze and cornice, capitals, bases, and sections of the shafts—lie scattered about and piled together in utter confusion. At the north-west corner of this temple is a side-entrance leading towards a large theatre a few rods distant, built against the side of a small hill and close to the city wall.

This theatre fronted towards the north and commanded a magnificent outlook over the city, so that those of the spectators occupying the highest row of benches enjoyed an uninterrupted prospect of the surrounding mountains and of the principal public buildings and private residences in the town. Steps led up to the entrance of the theatre at the ends of the proscenium and between it and the semicircular walls. There were side-doors also, and the gallery was

reached by means of vaulted passages running under the upper tiers of benches. The proscenium was embellished on the inside with pilasters and Corinthian columns in pairs, supporting a plain entablature, and between the pilasters were ornamented niches for statues. Twenty-eight tiers of benches are exposed to view, divided into sections by narrow aisles, and above the tenth tier a broad passage ran around the theatre, upon which were small chambers or private boxes. The benches are almost perfect, and the theatre probably accommodated upwards of five thousand spectators.

Descending eastward to the more level part of the city, we come to the grand colonnade surrounding an oval area, probably the forum, at the southern end of the main street and almost in front of the theatre. This colonnade consisted of about one hundred columns, fifty-five of which remain standing—on the west twenty-one, and then four; on the east eighteen, seven, and five with their entablatures. The columns have Ionic capitals but no pedestals, are about six feet in circumference and from fifteen to twenty feet high, in order to preserve the uniform level of the entablature. This colonnade was paved, and probably open at the south, in front of the theatre, and on the north, where the main street leads into the city.

Leaving the forum and proceeding northward, we will follow along the main street towards the gate of the city in that direction. The columns which once lined this splendid thoroughfare on either side, for about a mile, were mostly Corinthian, but nearly all of them have been overthrown by earthquakes, and many of those which still remain standing are of different styles and vary in height from twenty to twenty-five and even thirty feet. In some places the entablature of the shorter columns rests upon a bracket set into the shafts of the higher, and no attempt was made to preserve a uniform height in the construction of the colonnade. That feature, together with the difference in the size and height of the columns and their various styles, has led to the conclusion that this colonnade was built at different times and of material which had once been used for other purposes. Although this street is rendered almost impassable by heaps of rubbish, blocks of stone, fallen entablatures, fragments of capitals, and parallel rows of prostrate columns, the roadway was not entirely destroyed, and the pavement can still be

seen in some places, with the ruts made by chariot-wheels in the long ages of the past deeply worn into its hard surface.

This side street which we have now reached was also lined with similar columns, and it led from a gate in the west wall of the city to a bridge which crossed the stream upon three substantial arches, the central one being the largest and highest. And here, at the angles where these two streets met and crossed each other, there



SECTION OF THE COLONNADE ALONG THE MAIN STREET AT JERASH.

were four cubical masses of stone, about seven feet high and fourteen feet side, with niches for statues. They probably were pedestals for colossal statues, or columns may have been placed upon them supporting a dome, under the centre of which a statue stood. Continuing northward along the main street we pass sections of the colonnade on the right and left, composed of successive rows of seven, three, and two columns, nearly all of which still support their entablatures; but the three large columns on the right are without

entablatures, and they are the first we have seen, thus far, amongst the remains at Jerash standing upon bases or pedestals.

Here on the left are the ruins of what apparently was once a beautiful building. In the rear wall of this edifice—the only part of it still standing, though in a ruinous condition—there is a large semicircular recess, or apse, with two rows of niches one above the



NICHES IN THE SEMICIRCULAR RECESS OF AN ELEGANT BUILDING.

other. Each row consists of three round and two intervening rectangular niches, above which was an elegant cornice with broken pediments. Masses of stone lie in confused heaps within the building, and from an inscription found upon a pedestal in the portico it is supposed to have been constructed during the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, or towards the latter part of the second century of our era.



PROPYLÆUM OF THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN.

We are now approaching a group of ruins near the centre of the town, the most imposing of which are the remains of the propylæum, or entrance to the court of the Temple of Jupiter or of the Sun. A bridge crossed the stream below us on the right, and this side street, lined with columns on either side, evidently led up from it to the propylæum. Sculptured blocks, sections of columns, and broken capitals, and pedestals lie scattered about the front of this grand gate-way, of which most of the façade still remains standing. On

either side of this lofty portal there were small entrances, or windows, and above them shell-shaped niches with projecting cornice and broken pediments. The gate-way was rectangular and is nearly perfect, but lintel and architrave have fallen, though enough remains of the latter to give a good idea of its highly ornamental character. From inscriptions found here it appears that this propylæum was constructed during the first half of the second century, in the time of Antoninus Pius, and that the temple was dedicated to the Sun.

As that noble edifice stands upon higher ground and is not visible from here, we will leave the main street and find our way to it up the hill westward and over great masses of ruins. And now we can form some idea of the magnificent effect produced upon the beholder as he advanced up the hill from the propylæum, and the temple with its surrounding columns and courts suddenly came into view. The great court was encompassed, except perhaps on the west, by a double colonnade, and the Temple of Jupiter or of the Sun stood in the middle of it, facing the east, upon a stylobate, or platform, about five feet high, surrounded by the columns of the peristyle, and those of the magnificent portico in front. The corner columns in the second row of the colonnade around the court were heart-shaped—that is, they were double in front and gradually tapered to a point in the rear. Of the many columns of the peristyle only two remain, one on either side of the portico.

A flight of steps led up to the portico which consisted of two rows of colossal Corinthian columns, six in each row. Five still remain standing in the first, and four in the second row; and those nine columns, together with the two in the peristyle, are the largest at Jerash, being about forty feet high and eighteen feet in circumference. The shafts of most of the columns were composed of five pieces, or sections, of the ordinary limestone of the neighborhood, which takes an excellent polish, and the capitals were admirably executed and beautifully ornamented with acanthus leaves. The capitals of two of these eleven columns have fallen, and the shafts of all of them are slightly out of place—a striking evidence of the unmistakable action of severe earthquake shocks. According to Burckhardt, "the number of columns which originally adorned the temple and its area was not less than two hundred or two hundred



TEMPLE OF JUPITER OR OF THE SUN



and fifty," but without careful examination and extensive excavations it is impossible to ascertain the exact number.[1]

The temple was about eighty feet long and sixty feet wide, but the roof and most of the front wall have been thrown down; the other three walls, however, are almost entire. The interior is encumbered with the remains of the fallen roof, and with the exception of a row of six plain niches on the side walls, was apparently without any architectural ornamentation. In the rear wall opposite the entrance of the temple there is a double arch and a vaulted recess with a small dark chamber on either side.

The city wall is a short distance to the west of this temple of the Sun, and not far from it, towards the south, are the remains of a small temple and probably those of a church. Returning to the main street we will follow it northward to the cross street that led to a large theatre in that part of the town.

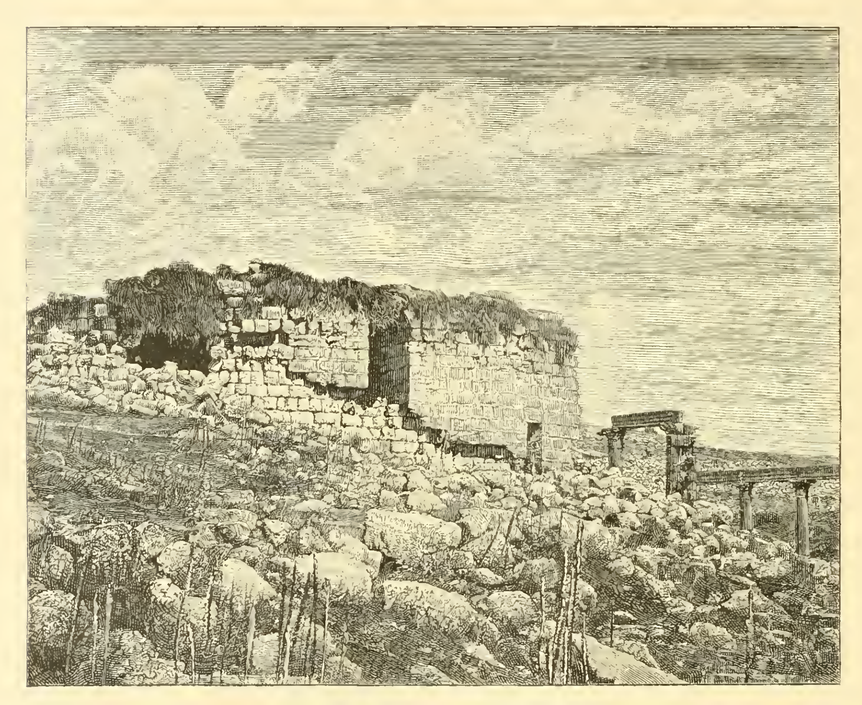
There are rows of prostrate columns, and others still standing with and without their entablatures on either side of this great thoroughfare; and now that we have reached the cross street there appears to have been another set of pedestals here, at the intersecting angles, like those we saw a short distance above the forum.

These, as you perceive, are square on the outside and rounded within, and covered with a low dome beneath which a statue may have stood, while others were probably placed upon those projecting pedestals in the sides of the rotunda. Let us turn to the left and pass up this side street westward.

These seven large Corinthian columns are all that remain of the original twelve that formed the portico of this theatre. There were two rows of them, six in each row, but now only five are still standing in the first, and two in the second row. Though the arena is larger, and apparently designed for the exhibition of combats between gladiators or wild beasts, this theatre could not have accommodated as many spectators as the one near the forum. It had sixteen tiers of benches and a row of six arched recesses, or private boxes, between the tenth and eleventh tiers, counting from the top. This theatre was comparatively low, but a fine view of the Temple of Jupiter behind it, to the south-west, could be obtained from the

[1] Travels in Syria, etc., p. 254.

highest tier of benches, and the tops of the columns of the portico are visible from the arena. The exterior wall of the theatre was built of bevelled stones, and there appear to have been two lofty main entrances to the benches and a smaller side door on the right.



NORTHERN THEATRE AT JERASH.

As there are no other ruins of any importance in this northern part of the town, and but few of special interest across the stream on the eastern side of the wady, we will return to the rotunda and retrace our steps along the main street towards the south gate.

The northern gate of the town, though now in ruins, was a plain but substantial structure, and within the massive city wall, on the right of it, are the remains of the guard-house. Proceeding from that gate southward to this rotunda, the ancient pavement of the street is still to be seen in some places in a tolerable state of preservation. About twenty columns in detached groups, most of them with Ionic capitals and supporting entablatures, remain standing on

the west side of the street, but on the left side the colonnade has been almost entirely overthrown, and only two small columns with their entablatures are now to be seen.

A short distance east of this rotunda, on the south side of the cross street and above the right bank of the stream, are the ruins of a large bath and the remains of a row of columns in front of it. The walls were massive, and it had numerous chambers with high vaulted roofs. It was supplied with water by an aqueduct, traces of which still remain. Below the bath, near the bed of the stream, is a fine fountain, called 'Ain Jerwân, with an abundant supply of delicious water. The existence of that copious spring may have led to the selection of this place for the site of the beautiful city of Jerash, since there is nothing else to recommend it.

There is a good deal of heavy masonry in the wady near the fountain, and the stream is half concealed by great clumps of oleander, twenty feet high and more, that border it on either side. That part of the town situated on the eastern side of the stream, or Seil Jerash, presents the appearance of a confused mass of ruins—the prostrate remains of a few public edifices and those of numerous private dwellings. Near the left bank of the stream, and a short distance to the south-east of the northern gate of the city, are the ruins of what originally appears to have been a small temple, and which may subsequently have been converted into a church. Only a portion of the wall, a vaulted entrance, and one of the interior columns remain; but from the number of broken columns, sculptured cornices, and heaps of stones, that edifice when completed must have presented quite an imposing appearance.

Farther down the valley there is a spring, a broken aqueduct, a ruined bridge, and the remains of a bath which may have had a colonnade of Corinthian columns around the exterior court. Still farther south the stream is spanned by a bridge of three arches, but both those bridges we have already noticed from the western part of the town, together with the streets lined with columns which led down to them. Indeed Jerash was pre-eminently a city of columns, the number of those still standing and the prostrate remains of others strewn everywhere on both sides of the stream in such bewildering confusion far exceeding three hundred.

The astonished and amazed visitor longs to know something definite and satisfactory about the history of this wonderful city.

It is not mentioned either in the Old Testament or in the New; neither its ancient name nor that of its founder have yet been discovered, and it is almost unknown to history. The existing remains, however, indicate plainly enough who were its builders in comparatively modern times, and by the aid of a few imperfect inscriptions we conclude that most, if not all, of its public edifices were erected after the beginning of our era. It is not of this Græco-Roman town, however, that the Biblical student desires special information; there was a previous city here, but no record of it exists, and travellers and archæologists are obliged to have recourse to mere conjecture in regard to its ancient name and former history.

Dr. Porter thinks that it is reasonable to conclude that this city occupies the site of Mahanaim; but the topographical indications in the various Biblical narratives suggest a position for that long-lost place nearer the Jordan. Dr. Merrill identifies Ramoth-gilead with Gerasa, and supports his theory with numerous references to Biblical and historical authorities which certainly claim careful consideration. We can examine that subject, however, when we reach es Salt, which has been generally accepted as the site of Ramoth-gilead.

But whatever uncertainty there may be regarding the Biblical history of Jerash, all agree that it is identical with Gerasa in Gilead, a city of the Decapolis, and upon the eastern confines of Peræa. Gerasa, however, was in existence long before the conquest of this region by the Romans, and it is first mentioned by Josephus, who relates that Alexander Jannæus, king of the Jews in the last century before Christ, marched against it, built a triple wall about the garrison, and took the place by force.[1] The Romans included Gerasa among the cities of the Decapolis, and it seems to have been burnt by the Jews in retaliation for the massacre of over twenty thousand of their number at Cæsarea.[2] Before the siege of Jerusalem, Vespasian sent his general, Lucius Annius, to Gerasa, who took the city, slew a thousand of its young men, carried their families away captive, and permitted his soldiers to plunder them, after which he set fire to their houses.[3]

[1] B. J. i. 4, 8. [2] B. J. ii. 18, 1. [3] B. J. iv. 9, 1.

For half a century or more after that Gerasa appears to have been a flourishing city, one of the largest and strongest on this side of the Jordan; and probably during the early centuries of our era it was adorned with those public edifices and private dwellings whose deserted and prostrate ruins now astonish the beholder. Though Gerasa became the nominal seat of a bishop, Christianity has left few evidences of its existence upon the ruins, and the Muhammedans seem never to have established themselves here, for we find no trace either of their work or worship. According to William of Tyre, the crusaders, under Baldwin II., in 1121 destroyed a castle here which was built by the king of Damascus; and an Arabian writer informs us that Jerash was deserted in the thirteenth century, and the few mills which we see on the border of the stream to-day were then, as now, the sole representatives of this once populous and splendid Græco-Roman and pagan city.

One is tempted to venture into the debatable regions of conjecture and inference in search of the origin and story of this unknown city. History informs us of a time when the commerce of Southern India, Western Arabia, and Eastern Africa was brought to Ezion-geber, the modern Akabah, at the head of the Elanitic gulf of the Red Sea. Thence it was carried to Petra, and from that city the great north-eastern caravan route led through Moab to 'Ammân. The well-watered vale of Jerash offered the next convenient halting-place, or station, for the caravans north of 'Ammân to el Busrah, Damascus, Palmyra, and their dependencies. Caravansaries, storehouses, and the necessary habitations for the merchants gradually rose up in the neighborhood of the fountain of Jerwân, as they did elsewhere at similar stations, including even that at Palmyra, the store city which "Solomon built in the wilderness."[1]

This great caravan commerce was in the hands of the Nabatheans for centuries, both before and after the commencement of our era, and probably they did not originate those stations, which we may suppose began to be formed at a very early age, but they merely availed of what was already established. Thus the selection of those mercantile stations was not made by the Greeks and Romans, but their superior skill, enterprise, and wealth enabled them to control

[1] 1 Kings ix. 18; 2 Chron. viii. 4.

not only the business, but also to obtain complete possession of the places where it was principally conducted. Greek and Roman merchants began to visit those trading-stations, and growing rich by the rapid increase of commerce they finally settled in them, bringing with them Western civilization and classic taste. Hence arose the stately forum, the magnificent colonnades, the great theatres, the splendid temples, and the luxurious baths. Thus whatever ancient material they found available was used in the construction of those grand edifices; and those cities along the line of that caravan route ultimately became wholly Roman, and all trace of their former existence entirely disappeared.

This condition of things would naturally continue as long as the commerce which sustained it lasted; but when the route was changed by which the commodities of the East were transferred to the West, these cities necessarily declined, and they were abandoned by the wealthy and forsaken by all. To translate prophecy into history, the Lord's "sacrifice in Bozrah" and his "great slaughter in the land of Idumea" have been completed. He hath stretched "out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. Thorns [have come up] in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof," and there dwell "the owl and the raven. The wild beasts of the desert" are there, and there "the great owl makes her nest and lays, and hatches and gathers under her shadow."[1]

Certainly those desolations present a convincing testimony to the fulfilment of divine prophecy.

That is emphatically true. No mere human sagacity could have foreseen the utter ruin of 'Ammân, Jerash, el Busrah, and other magnificent cities along the extended caravan line from Petra to Palmyra. Let us, therefore, carry away with us the impressive lesson which they teach, and the most important which they now confer upon mankind.

Instead of spending another night at Sûf we will pass on to 'Ajlûn, two hours and a half west of it, to which place our muleteers have already preceded us. After leaving the olive groves of Sûf we shall be overshadowed by an uninterrupted forest of venerable oak and other evergreen trees for more than an hour to 'Ain Jen-

[1] Isa. xxxiv. 6, 11, 13–15.

neh, where there are several fine fountains, which water the flourishing gardens and orchards and irrigate the fields of that village.

These forests extend a great distance both to the north and south, and a large part of the country might be brought under cultivation by clearing away the trees. The substratum is everywhere limestone, the soil is naturally fertile, and in the spring of the year the surface is clothed with luxuriant pasture. "Jebel Ajlûn," says Dr. Eli Smith, "presents the most charming rural scenery that I have seen in Syria: a continued forest of noble trees, chiefly the evergreen oak, sindiân, covers a large part of it, while the ground beneath is clothed with luxuriant grass, a foot or more in height, and decked with a rich variety of wild flowers."

'Ain Jenneh certainly has the largest walnut-trees we have seen east of the Jordan, and the gardens and orchards contain a great variety of other trees—the olive, fig, apple, plum, quince, pear, apricot, and lemon—all of which are loaded with fruit.

That is owing entirely to the abundance of water from the large fountains under the cliffs farther up the wady, and the same cause gives to this region around the village of 'Ajlûn its well-wooded appearance and rural beauty.

'Ajlûn, September 25th. Evening.

This has been a day of varied and uninterrupted enjoyment, and the evening ride through those venerable oak woods, when

"Twilight gray
Had in her sable livery all things clad,"

was singularly impressive, and my fancy was busy recalling some of the historic events which have rendered those great forests memorable, especially during the earliest Biblical times.

The thickly wooded mountain range as far north as the Jarmuk or Heiromax, and south to the Zerka or Jabbok, is now called Jebel 'Ajlûn, and it is certainly one of the most picturesque regions east of the Jordan. It is also distinguished by some remarkable incidents in the early history of the Hebrew people. Jebel 'Ajlûn is in the northern half of "the land of Gilead," and it is first mentioned in the Bible in connection with the history of Jacob. Laban overtook Jacob in Mount Gilead, and before parting they set up a heap of

stones as a witness between them. "Laban called it Mizpah, or watch-tower, but Jacob called it Galeed, the heap of witness;" and "from thence they call that land the land of Gilead at this day."[1] "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim [the two hosts or camps]. And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom."[2]

Jacob was coming from the north with the intention of descending into the Jordan valley, and probably crossing that river, on his way to Shechem, at the well-known ford of ed Damieh, where the road from Gilead to that city has always passed. This Wady 'Ajlûn would offer one of the best lines of descent to the Jordan valley north of the Zerka or Jabbok, and here Jacob, after leaving Mahanaim with its divine manifestations, would find ample supply of water for his large household and his numerous flocks and herds, camels and cattle, as well as abundant pasture.

Descending to the Jordan valley, and directing his course through it southward for about a day's journey, Jacob met his returning messengers, and learned with dismay that Esau was coming to meet him, "and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed," and he halted on the north bank of the Jabbok, "and he lodged there the same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother." He well knew the character of Esau, and adopted the right means to propitiate him and to gain the desired reconciliation with him. He selected and sent forward a large present of sheep and goats, camels and cattle, such as his brother would be likely to appreciate.[3]

And not only was the present large, but there was wisdom in the method adopted to render it effective. "And he said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove. And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee? then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us. And so

[1] Gen. xxxi. 46–49; Ant. i. 19, 11. [2] Gen. xxxii. 1–3. [3] Gen. xxxii. 6, 7, 13–15.

commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me. So went the present over before him; and himself lodged that night in the company."[1]

As he expected, Esau was appeased. The next day "Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And Jacob passed over and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept."[2] The meeting of the two brothers after their long separation was altogether unique, and the description of the scene reads now, after more than three thousand years, like a page out of some Oriental romance. In simplicity, naturalness, and touching pathos there is nothing equal to it in the Bible, unless it be the account of the interview between Joseph and his brethren in Egypt when he made himself known to them.[3]

On the supposition that Jacob descended to the valley of the Jordan through Wady 'Ajlûn, where would Peniel be — the place where his name was changed from Jacob to Israel?

It was, apparently, on the north side of the Jabbok and not far from the ford where Jacob's household crossed that stream. There probably was no inhabited place near it at that time, but the spot where that mysterious conflict occurred may have been marked by "a heap of stones," or pillar like that at Mizpah. In the time of Gideon, about five hundred years later, there was a city and a tower at Penuel, and Gideon "beat down the tower, and slew the men of the city."[4] Nearly three hundred years later Penuel was rebuilt by Jeroboam, the son of Nebat and the first king of Israel; and according to Josephus, he built him a palace at Penuel, a city so called.[5] Dr. Merrill places the site of Penuel at Tellûl edh Dhahab, or Hills of Gold, in the valley of the Jabbok, about four miles east of Mushra'a Kana'an, or Canaan's Ford. "They are covered with ruins, and on the eastern of the two are the remains of an ancient castle."[6] If that identification is correct, then the scene of Jacob's mysterious

[1] Gen. xxxii. 16–21. [2] Gen. xxxiii. 1–4. [3] Gen. xlv. 1–15.
[4] Judg. viii. 8, 9, 17. [5] 1 Kings xii. 25; Ant. viii. 8, 4. [6] East of the Jordan, p. 391.

conflict must have been nearer the crossing of the Jabbok and some distance from the supposed site of the ancient city.

Here at 'Ajlûn we are in the midst, I suppose, of that "wood of Ephraim" in which the battle between the armies of David and his rebellious son Absalom was fought, and which "devoured more people that day than the sword devoured."[1]

We shall see during our ride to-morrow many "a great oak" and terebinth with "thick boughs," and low, wide-spreading branches large enough to have caused that fatal accident to Absalom, and which proved so disastrous to his cause. One can scarcely read the narrative of that battle, as recorded in the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of 2d Samuel, without pausing to dwell upon some of the many reflections which are suggested by it; but they are too obvious to require illustration or comment.

It grows late, and I will only add that early to-morrow morning we will visit Kŭl'at er Rŭbŭd, north-west of 'Ajlûn, situated on a high and prominent peak directly above the Jordan valley, and which commands a more extensive outlook over the Land of Promise than even Pisgah, where Moses stood and viewed the landscape o'er. We will make the ascent in time to see the rising sun light up the mountains and hills, the valleys and fertile plains of "Canaan's fair and happy land."

Ajlûn, September 26th.

The cool and bracing air of the morning will render the ride up the mountain-side to Kŭl'at er Rŭbŭd less fatiguing, and the transparency of the atmosphere will lend enchantment to the extensive view from the top of the castle.

It has taken three-quarters of an hour from our tents to reach the summit of the ridge, winding up for the last fifteen minutes, by a zigzag path, the steep side of the lofty peak which is crowned by this ruined castle of er Rŭbŭd.

The outlook from this fortress is, indeed, magnificent and impressive beyond anything we have seen "on this side Jordan toward the sunrising," and one never to be forgotten.

The mountain descends abruptly, on the west, sheer down to the valley of the Jordan, and the river itself can be traced by a "line of

[1] 2 Sam. xviii. 6–8.

luxuriant verdure" from the Sea of Galilee on the north to the Dead Sea on the south, a distance of about seventy miles from sea to sea, but of over two hundred miles following the sinuosities of that remarkable river. That high mountain on the extreme north is Hermon, and the billowy ranges south and west of it include the picturesque hills of Galilee and Nazareth, and Mount Tabor. By the aid of your glass you can see the plain of Esdraelon, and beyond it is Mount Carmel, with its bold promontory projecting far into the blue Mediterranean, that "great and wide sea."

The mountains of Gilboa, the hills of Samaria, Ebal and Gerezim enclosing the vale of Nâblus—the Shechem of Jacob's time—are all plainly visible nearly due west; and southward stretches the rocky region of Ephraim and Benjamin to the Mount of Olives, behind which is Jerusalem, the city of the Great King. The hills around Bethlehem and those still higher between it and Hebron close the prospect in that direction, while below and beyŏnd all else, from north to south, lies the sea-coast from the Ladder of Tyre to the roadstead of ancient Joppa, and the land of the Philistines fades away into the sandy desert between Palestine and Egypt.

"Thus as we look down from Kŭl'at er Rŭbŭd—the watch-tower of Gilead—upon this river and valley, the Sea and the Lake, our eyes rest upon the scene of a multitude of famous historical events, in which many of the great men of antiquity bore a part: Chedorlaomer, Abraham and Lot, Jacob, Joshua, Gideon and Jephthah, David and Solomon, Absalom and Joab [Elijah and Elisha], Judas Maccabeus, Pompey, Vespasian and Herod the Great, John the Baptist, and Christ, the Redeemer of the world."[1] In reality this prospect includes more points of Biblical and historical interest than any other on the face of the earth. Deeply impressive as it is, we cannot linger here, but must descend to 'Ajlûn and resume our ride over the oak-clad mountains of Gilead to es Salt, upon the south-eastern side of the lofty peak of Jebel Osh'a.

Has this castle of er Rŭbŭd no history, sacred or secular?

It is highly probable that a position so commanding and so easily defended was occupied from remote antiquity by a fortress of some kind. The moat is broad and deep, and it was partly excavated in

[1] East of the Jordan, p. 365.

the solid rock upon which the castle stood; and in the foundations there are large stones, similar in character to those "in the lower portions of the castle at Shŭkîf and Banias."[1] Those indications point to an older fortress than the present castle, still they are less distinct than what one would expect to find.

In its present form Kŭl'at er Rŭbŭd is a rectangular fortress, nearly square, with thick walls and flanking towers or bastions. An Arabic inscription within the walls of the castle ascribes its construction to Saladin, the renowned antagonist of the crusaders; it is, therefore, Saracenic and comparatively modern. Abulfeda, the Arabian historian who flourished during the first half of the fourteenth century, says, "'Ajlûn is a fortress, and its suburb Rŭbŭd is called el Bâ'ûtheh. The fortress is distant from the town about a horse-race." And thus "a singular transposition of names seems to have occurred between the two places."[2] The castle is now deserted and partially in ruins, but in the early years of this century it was the residence of the governor of the district of 'Ajlûn.

The village of 'Ajlûn lies principally on the right side of Wady Jenneh, and the inhabitants are mostly Christians of the Greek sect. The only objects of interest about the place are a new building, intended as a chapel to accommodate a few families who have become Protestants, and this old mosk, with its strange and rather dilapidated square minaret, on the bank of the brook. Built into the walls are some fragments of sculpture and portions of inscriptions, and about the mosk are a few indications of antiquity.

It is well that we are to reach a safe asylum at the end of our day's ride, for there is but a single inhabited village, through which we pass along the route we are to follow, between 'Ajlûn and es Salt.

What was the controversy about between you and our guide this morning before we left 'Ajlûn?

The man declared that he could not accompany us alone, not from any fear while with us, but because the country between this and es Salt was so unsafe that he must have two companions to return with him. As his assertion was confirmed by the Greek priest and others I was obliged to consent, and thus we have three armed men with us. Dr. Merrill, wishing to send some of his im-

[1] East of the Jordan, p. 375.

[2] Rob. Res. vol. iii. Sec. App. p. 166.

pedimenta from 'Ajlûn to es Salt, experienced the same difficulty, and no doubt these wild Gilead mountains are sometimes unsafe.

Our guide is leading us up the steep mountain-side to the south-east of 'Ajlûn, and as we rise higher and higher the prospect over the valley of the Jordan and the country west of it widens rapidly, and every moment becomes more varied and impressive.

Several villages begin to appear far below us on the plain of the Ghôr, and others upon the many-shaped hills of Samaria, on the western side of the river; the Jordan itself, however, is not visible. Its channel is sunk so deep below the level of the plain through which it meanders that it cannot be seen even from its own upper banks. Its ever-winding way, however, can be traced in many places by the verdant fringe of willows and other trees and bushes that line its borders.

What is the name of that village below us on the right, and which we saw from Kŭl'at er Rŭbŭd?

It is called Kefrenjy; a considerable place, and the only one that merits a passing notice in the beautiful valley of 'Ajlûn.

Before passing into the thick forest ahead of us let me direct your attention to the course of the Zerka or Jabbok across the plain of the Jordan until it unites with that river, a short distance north of the ruined Roman bridge near the ford of ed Damieh. Dr. Merrill thoroughly explored that region in search of Succoth, and is inclined to locate it at a conspicuous mound, called Tell Deir 'Alla, "just north of the Jabbok" and east of the Jordan, and he may be right.[1] But one would naturally expect that Jacob would hasten to put the Jordan between him and his brother, whom he had deceived and whose resentment he might justly dread. Instead of recrossing the Jabbok and erecting his booths on the north of it, in the open plain, I think that Jacob crossed the Jordan and made his winter encampment somewhere in Wady Fâri'a and on the banks of the little stream that descends through that valley and enters the Jordan near the Damieh ford. The road to Shechem has always followed up that valley, and no better or safer place could Jacob have desired than the beautiful Wady Fâri'a.

A short distance ahead of us is a fine fountain, called 'Ain Tha-

[1] East of the Jordan, p. 387.

luth. It is an hour from 'Ajlûn, and near it is a ruin bearing the name of Khirbet Thaluth. Thus far there are indications of former cultivation along our route, and the outlook westward is very wide and varied. Kŭl'at er Rŭbŭd is quite a prominent and striking feature in the distance far below us to the north-west. We shall come in half an hour, through a dense wood, to another fountain, called 'Ain Um el Jâlûd, where there is a Moslem muzâr dedicated to el Khŭdr, St. George, and around it are many olive-trees, whose olives and oil are devoted to the maintenance of that sacred shrine or saint's tomb. It is the only one we shall see to-day.

We are wandering through a veritable wilderness in this oak forest, and without any visible road or pathway.

By following down the stream from the fountain we shall come, in about half an hour, to a well-travelled road from Sûf which descends westward to the Ghôr, or valley of the Jordan, and across it to the ford of ed Damieh. Between the place where we cross it and Sûf are the three villages of Dibbîn, et Tekitty, and Reimûn, and our guide says that this large open space in the woods is called Um el Jauzeh. I remember it on account of the great thickness of the strata in the cliffs on our left. They are composed of compact limestone, and some of the large blocks I measured were more than twenty feet thick. The guide warns us to look well to our safety and that of the loaded mules for the next hour, as the ascent through these woods is very steep. Road there is none, and the oak forest is more dense and tangled than any other in this region.

On a former occasion those of us on horseback escaped through these woods without being caught amongst the branches like Absalom, but the muleteers were greatly troubled by the bewilderment of their animals, and some of the loads were overthrown by projecting rocks and the low branches of the trees. The only indication of man's presence in this extraordinary wilderness is a small ruin, as of a tower, called Kŭsr Nejdeh, on the top of the hill half a mile west of us. We have now reached the highest part of this great dividing range of the Gilead mountains, and it commands magnificent prospects in every direction. Captain Warren, of the British Palestine Exploration Fund, says that "this line of hills is a remarkable feature in the country, and is somewhat higher than the Jebel

Husha range," or Mount Gilead, north-west of es Salt. From this point there is a very steep descent of nearly an hour to the village of Burmeh, where we will rest and lunch.

This has, indeed, been a great descent, and it has brought us into an entirely different climate.

We are here fairly within the profound gorge of the Jabbok, and the climatic transition was far more marked in April than at this season in September. From shivering in the cold wind on the mountain top, by a single hour's descent we found ourselves rejoicing in the balmy atmosphere of this village of Burmeh, embowered as it is by fruit-trees and semitropical bushes and flowers. To us, at present, the one thing most delightful is this noble fountain with its clear, cold water. Burmeh is a prosperous village, inhabited by Moslems and Christians of the Greek sect, and surrounded by olive groves, many of the trees exceptionally large, indicating a peaceful existence in by-gone generations.

The descent from Burmeh to Mukhâdat en Nusranîyeh, the Ford of the Christian Woman, over the Zerka or Jabbok is more than two thousand feet, and it will take an hour and a half to accomplish it. We shall pass through many olive groves, and for part of the distance the road leads over sandstone, the only specimen of the kind we have yet seen east of the Jordan. We will find the Zerka comparatively low, but in the spring, on a former visit, it was a formidable stream and very rapid. It had recently been quite unfordable, as could be seen by the grass and bushes lodged on the banks.

We spent the night encamped in a level field just below the ford. It was then covered with a luxuriant growth of wild oats, so like the cultivated cereal that we at first hesitated to enter it; but it was of nature's own sowing and had no owner to claim possession. The oats were three feet high, and grew so thickly together that our horses could hardly wade through them. Of course they revelled in such exuberant pasture, and the weary mules, after their loads and pack-saddles had been taken off, rolled and tumbled about upon it in mere wantonness of animal enjoyment.

Amongst the wild oats grew clover more than two feet high, with red tufts three inches long and large in proportion, whilst the rushing, roaring river just beyond was hidden beneath impenetrable

thickets of blooming oleander from ten to fifteen feet high. We found the air oppressively hot during the first half of the night, and no wonder, for we had descended from the top of Mount Gilead, west of es Salt, to the ford—a descent of at least three thousand five hundred feet. Mukhâdat en Nusranîyeh must be nearly on a level, if not actually below, the surface of the Mediterranean Sea, and that extreme depression accounts for the luxuriant and almost tropical vegetation in that part of the Zerka valley.

Soon after going into camp we were visited by the sheikh of a Bedawîn encampment with a villanous-looking following. But they did no harm, and after the usual smoking of pipes and sipping coffee they quietly retired to their camp, pitched upon a shelf of the stupendous and overhanging cliffs a short distance below our tents. Just before sunset a herd of black cattle suddenly invaded our camp, fat and frolicsome and sufficiently large to remind us of the famous bulls of Bashan. Their keepers, half-clad boys and girls, grinned and laughed at us from the cliffs above, but ere night set in they, too, betook themselves with their cattle to the Bedawîn encampment. Although we were not particularly satisfied with our neighbors, they did not molest us during the night nor pester us with importunate demands for bakhshîsh the next morning.

This last steep descent has brought us to the bank of the Zerka, and we will now cross the river at the ford, not a very formidable undertaking at this season of the year.

The gorge of the Zerka is exceedingly wild and picturesque, and the cliffs rise almost perpendicularly to a great height on either side.

This mighty chasm now forms the boundary between the district of el Belka on the south and that of Jebel 'Ajlûn on the north, as in ancient times it divided the kingdom of Sihon from that of Og, king of Bashan. The perennial source of the Zerka, or Blue River, owing to the peculiar color of the water, is near 'Ammân, and its course north-east to Kŭl'at ez Zerka; from there it trends round to the north-west, and above the junction with Seil Jerash its direction is changed to nearly west until it reaches the Jordan valley, when it turns to the south-west and enters that river a short distance above the ruined Roman bridge near the Damieh ford.

We cannot linger in this remarkable gorge, for there remain four

hours to be travelled before we reach our tents at es Salt. The ascent from the valley of the Zerka is exceedingly steep after leaving Mukhâdat en Nusranîyeh, but in about an hour we shall enter upon a wide and nearly level plateau, the commencement of the famous wooded heights and fertile plain of the Belka. Much of the forest has been cleared away, leaving only picturesque clumps of oak and pine trees, here and there, in places too rocky for the pick and the plough. It is good land for agricultural purposes, and some parts are covered with flourishing wheat and barley in the spring. The fields which now appear so burnt and bare are then exuberant and verdant, and all aglow with an infinite number and great variety of wild flowers bright and gay. Here, for the first time in this region, we saw many birds: pigeons, turtle-doves, jays, blackbirds, and thrushes, and large coveys of red-legged partridges.

It will take more than an hour to cross this upland plateau to a fine fountain called 'Ain 'Allân, which issues from a large cave amongst the rocks, and is overshadowed by several green fig-trees laden with fruit in their season. Near the fountain are the ruins of a considerable village, to which the name of Khirbet 'Allân is given, and another site, some distance to the east, bears the Biblical name of Sîhân—Sihon, king of the Amorites.

From 'Ain 'Allân a long and tedious climb of an hour and a half will bring us to the highest part of the road over this Gilead range, or Jebel Jil'âd, and near it is Khirbet ez Zî, where are the remains of a few columns and the ruins of some ancient buildings. Had we the time, we might leave the direct road to es Salt not far from there and turn off westward to visit mukâm en Neby Osh'a, near the highest point of Jebel Osh'a, as that loftiest peak of this mountain range east of the Jordan is called. The mukâm is a plain Muhammedan structure, consisting of a vaulted room containing the reputed tomb of the prophet Hosea, and it is venerated by Moslems, Christians, and Jews. The tomb is of ordinary masonry, about twenty feet long, three feet high, and three feet broad, covered with the usual colored cloths presented to the saint as votive offerings by devout pilgrims and "true believers."

A noble oak-tree overshadows the mukâm, and around it are the graves of a few Moslem devotees. Adjoining the building is a large

cistern, and near it is a small spring of impure water. Formerly the Bedawîn, the inhabitants of es Salt, and others made pilgrimages to the shrine of Neby Osh'a, and there they sacrificed, prayed, and feasted, and a fair was generally held in the neighborhood on such occasions. But the zeal of all sects has greatly declined in these degenerate days, pilgrimages are less frequent, the annual fair has dwindled to nothing, and es Salt has become the commercial centre of all this region east of the Jordan.

What possible connection was there between the prophet Hosea and that solitary and lofty summit of Jebel Osh'a on Mount Gilead?

None apparently; nor is there anything in the history of that prophet to invest his name and memory with special interest to the Muhammedans or the Bedawîn Arabs of the desert. The name Osh'a attached to that mountain-peak, if ancient, probably refers to Joshua. Dr. Porter suggests that of Elijah, but none of his recorded acts were connected with this region, while the great Hebrew captain may have made that his central station when engaged in his military expeditions against Sihon and Og, and the memories of such an occupation would naturally have been preserved amongst the traditions of the people.

"Jebel Osh'a," says Dr. Merrill, "is perhaps the most sightly place in Palestine after Mount Hermon. Mount Hermon, Safed, the hills behind Tiberias, and the plateau which slopes towards Hâttîn, Tabor, the hills about Nazareth, those of Naphtali, Ephraim, and Manasseh, Little Hermon, Ebal and Gerizim, Neby Samwîl, and Massada are in sight, and in fact nearly every prominent point in the unbroken range of mountains from Jebel esh Sheikh [Hermon] clear around to the south end of the Dead Sea. All the Jordan valley, more than four thousand feet below us, is at our feet; the plain of Beisân, the tells at the mouth of Wady 'Ajlûn and Wady ez Zerka, all the Nimrîn and the Shittim plains and the tells upon them, the mouth of the Jordan, the entire Dead Sea, including the extreme south end and el Lisân, the rolling country of Moab, or the 'Mishor' of the Bible, the hills about 'Ammân, the Haurân, and the mountains of Gilead are in full view.

"In this wide and comprehensive prospect the eye sweeps over the country to the north, the west, the south, and the east—a sweep

of eighty to one hundred miles in extent. If one utterly ignorant of the Bible record should go east of the Jordan to find the point commanding the most extensive view on all sides, he would select Jebel Osh'a. It is eight hundred to one thousand feet higher than Mount Nebo itself. 'The hill over against Jericho' could just as well be this place as Jebel Neba, and this would meet the conditions of the thirty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy better than any other point. These are claims or facts which belong to this mountain, independent of any claim of Jebel Neba [now generally identified with Mount Nebo] to be the spot where Moses stood."[1]

From this turn in the road at the top of the ridge above Khirbet ez Zî, it will take us three-quarters of an hour to reach our tents at es Salt, and by a very steep descent.

They will be a welcome sight after our fatiguing ride of nearly ten hours from 'Ajlûn over the loftiest parts of Mount Gilead.

[1] East of the Jordan, pp. 194, 279.

XVI.

ES SALT TO 'AMMÂN.

Es Salt.—Situation of the Town.—Capital of the Belka and only Inhabited Place in that District.—Population of es Salt.—Warlike and Independent.—Protestant Church and Schools.—Subterranean Bath.—Es Salt overthrown by Wars and Earthquakes.—Native Houses.—Shops.—The People of es Salt resemble the Arabs of the Desert.—Vineyards and Olive-groves.—Fruit-trees and Vegetable Gardens.—Wheat and Barley.—Products of the Flocks purchased from the Bedawîn.—The Castle of es Salt.—Daher el 'Omar.—Turkish Garrison.—Abundance of Water.—'Ain Jeidûr.—Ramoth-gilead.—Cities of Refuge.—Levitical City.—One of Solomon's Purveyors.—Gilead and the Region of Argob.—Ahab, Jehoshaphat, and Ben-hadad.—Ahaziah, Joram, and Hazael.—Jehu.—Elisha.—"Watchman on the Tower of Jezreel."—"The Driving of Jehu."—Region around es Salt not Adapted to the Use of Chariots.—Ramoth-gilead north of the Jabbok.—Gerasa, Jerash.—Dr. Merrill.—Jerash opposite to Shechem.—No Markets south of es Salt.—'Adwân Guards and Guides.—Scarcity of Water.—Wady Jeidûr.—Prospect over the Land of Gilead.—Rolling Plain, deep Valleys, and Oak Woods.—Fertile Fields and Abundant Harvests.—'Ammân to 'Arâk el Emîr.—Roman Bridge.—Large Pool, Source of the Jabbok.— High, rolling Plateau.— Bedawîn Battle-ground.—Khirbet Sâr.—Ancient Jazer.—Wady es Seir.—Oak Forest.—Rock-tomb or Dwelling.—Captain Warren.—Rock-hewn Chambers at Petra.—Bedawîn Robbers.—Rock-bound Amphitheatre.—'Arâk el Emîr.—Castle of Hyrcanus described by Josephus.—Ruins of the Castle.—"A Lovely Landscape."—Rev. A. E. Northey.—Canon Tristram.—Great Stones.—Colossal Lions.—Ionic Cornices and Egyptian Capitals.—Rock Dwellings and Stables excavated in the Limestone Cliffs.—Cisterns, Caves, and Upright Stones, with Checker Pattern.—Ruins of Public Buildings and Private Dwellings.—Aqueduct and Large Reservoir.—Fossils and Curious Petrifactions.—Oleanders over Thirty Feet high.—The Dead Sea.—Wady Sha'ib.— Bedawîn Encampments.— The Stolen Pitchfork and the Christian Guide.—Mukâm of Neby Sha'ib.—Votive Offerings.—Resentful Wrath of a Moslem Saint.—Abundance of Water and Luxuriant Vegetation. — Golden Daisies and Wild Lupins. — Heavy Crops of Wheat and Barley.—Flour-mills.—Plain of el Bŭk'ah.—Favorite Camping-ground of the Bedawîn.—El Bŭk'ah described by Captain Warren.—Flocks of Sheep and Goats.—Khirbet el Bâsha.—Khirbet es Sâfût.—The Gate of 'Ammân.—Ard el Hemâr.—A Rough and Uncultivated Region.—From Kŭl'at ez Zerka to Yajûz.—Permanent Fountains of the Zerka.—The Jabbok.—The Strong Border of Ammon.—Kŭl'at ez Zerka.—The Haj.—Encampment of Bedawîn.—Migration in Search of Pasture.—Bedawîn Women moving

Camp.—Biblical References to taking down and setting up Tents and Tabernacles.—An Uncultivated Region.—Storks and Partridges.—Fine old Oaks.—Extensive Prospect.—Hermon, Sŭlkhad, and Kuleib Haurân.—Shouting Shepherds and Barking Dogs.—Bedawîn Encampment.—Forests of Oak and Terebinth Trees.—Yajûz.—Exuberant Pasture.—Fountains and Flocks.—Small Roman Temple.—Great Terebinths.—Large Stone in the Trunk of a Tree.—Open Enclosures with Massive Walls.—Bedawîn Cemetery.—The Grave of Nimr el 'Adwân.—Ruins at Yajûz.—Large Disc or Millstone.—Extensive Quarries.—Female Statue broken by the 'Adwân.—The Moabite Stone.—Sculptured Eagles and Lions.—Gadda.—El Jebeiha, Jogbehah.—Outlook over Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh.—Hermon, Jerash, and el Bŭk'ah.—Ruins buried beneath the Surface at el Jebeiha.—Highly Cultivated and Densely Populated Region.—Curious Rock Strata.—Wady el Haddâdeh.—Noisy Torrent.—Total Desolation and Utter Loneliness at 'Ammân.—Rabbath Ammon and the Græco-Roman City of Philadelphia.—The Site of a Great Capital.—Situation of the City.—Overthrown by Earthquakes.—Corinthian Temple or Tomb.—Large Caravansary, Church, and Mosk.—The Basilica.—Imposing Structure.—Roman Bridge.—Banks of the Stream lined with Masonry.—Full of Fish.—Primitive Fishing by the Bedawîn.—Ruins of an Old Mill.—The Great Theatre.—Seats for Eight Thousand Spectators.—The Forum.—Colonnade of over Fifty Corinthian Columns.—Odeon.—Northern Wall of the City.—Gate-way of the City.—Remarkable Rock-cut Tomb.—Large Temple.—Main Street lined with Columns.—Ruined Houses upon the Steep Declivity of the Hill.—"The Line of Confusion, and the Stones of Emptiness."—The Citadel-hill.—Square Watch-tower.—Peripteral Temple within the Citadel.—Greek Inscription in Large Letters.—Beautiful Church or Mosk within the Citadel described by Canon Tristram and Captain Conder.—Massive Walls of the Citadel.—Large and Deep Cisterns.—Underground Reservoir.—Concealed Passage.—Antiochus the Great.—Biblical Interest in Rabbath Ammon.—The Iron Bedstead of Og.—Captain Conder's Suggestion regarding Og's Throne.—Independence of Rabbath Ammon.—The Siege of Rabbath by Joab.—Duration of the Siege.—Capture of the City of Waters.—Joab's Message to David.—The Citadel taken by David.—Remarkable Fulfilment of Prophetic Denunciations.—Droves of Camels, and Numerous Flocks.—Ammon denounced by the Prophets.—Nothing but Ruins at Rabbath, and Ammon a Perpetual Desolation.—Ptolemy of Egypt.—Philadelphia mentioned by Greek and Roman Writers and Josephus.—The Citadel Besieged and Captured by Antiochus and Herod the Great.—A City of the Decapolis.—Seat of a Bishop.—Sunday amongst the Ruins at 'Ammân.—Reproduction of Patriarchal Times.—The Solemn Storks.—Three Sabbaths at 'Ammân.—Old Woman and her Daughter.—Grain preserved in the Theatre.—Absence of Trees.—A Plough for Firewood.—Natural Phenomena.—Disappearance and Re-appearance of the Stream between 'Ammân and Kŭl'at ez Zerka.

September 27th.

ES SALT is so completely surrounded by high mountains and deep valleys that the town cannot be seen until one is right above it, and then it presents a very striking and picturesque appearance. It is built on both sides of a narrow and precipitous wady which

descends rapidly eastward; but the greater part of the houses cling to the declivities of the steep and isolated hill, the summit of which is crowned by a modern Saracenic castle. It is the capital of the Belka, the residence of a Turkish governor, and now the only inhabited place in that district. The population of es Salt consists of about two thousand five hundred Moslems, and five hundred Christians of the Greek sect; and owing to their isolated position amongst the Bedawîn east of the Jordan, the inhabitants of this town are both warlike and independent.

Many of the Christians have become Protestants, and they have built a substantial church, with a house adjoining for a parsonage, with rooms for schools and for other religious purposes. To obtain a foundation for the church, they dug through rubbish for more than thirty feet, and then came upon an ancient bath, the chambers, arches, and pavement of which were quite perfect. That indicates not only great antiquity, but also numerous overthrows by wars, earthquakes, and other catastrophies by which this narrow valley has been filled up to a surprising depth.

The houses of es Salt resemble those seen in many mountain villages throughout this country, though there are some of a more respectable kind, and amongst them are a few shops where the articles in most demand by the Bedawîn are made and sold. The majority of the people do not differ in dress, appearance, and manners from their neighbors, the Arabs of the desert, and the women generally wear a single, loose, blue cotton garment, with long flowing sleeves, like their Bedawîn sisters of the 'Adwân and other tribes. The chief occupation of the inhabitants is agriculture, and the surrounding olive-groves, the carefully terraced hill-sides covered with extensive vineyards producing large clusters of grapes and fine raisins, and the fruit and vegetable gardens of es Salt, are justly celebrated throughout all this region. Most of the wheat and barley grown in the valleys and on the plains in all directions belongs to the inhabitants of es Salt, and some of their fields are as far east as 'Ammân. From the Bedawîn they purchase wool, butter, skins, and other products of their flocks and herds; but the amount formerly furnished by them has greatly decreased in recent times.

The castle on the summit of the hill above the town is a very conspicuous object, but it is in a ruinous condition, and only a portion of it is now serviceable. It was surrounded by a moat excavated in the solid rock, and the substructions are ancient; but in its present form—a rectangular fortress with square towers at the corners—it is comparatively modern. It was repaired, if not entirely rebuilt, during the latter part of the eighteenth century by Dhâher el 'Omar, the predecessor of the infamous Jezzâr Pasha, surnamed the Butcher, and he resided in it for several years, until finally driven out by the united efforts of the rival factions in the town. It is now occupied by a Turkish garrison whose martial music wakes up strange echoes amongst these hills of Gilead. Es Salt is abundantly supplied with water, and may have owed its existence originally to the large spring near the middle of the town. The stream from it, together with that from the noble fountain of 'Ain Jeidûr, in the deep wady below, serves to irrigate the extensive fruit orchards and large vegetable gardens along the valley.

What evidence is there to prove that es Salt occupies the site of Ramoth-gilead, the second city of refuge east of the Jordan?

There is no resemblance between the modern and the ancient name of the two places; but the situation of the former, on the declivities of a steep and lofty hill in Gilead, accords with the supposed position of the latter, upon the "heights of Gilead," as the name Ramoth-gilead implies. If the Jewish tradition be correct, that the three cities of refuge on the east side of the Jordan were opposite to the three on the west side of that river, then we must look for Ramoth-gilead about a day's journey farther north, so as to place it opposite to Shechem, the modern Nâblus. Besides being appointed a city of refuge, Ramoth-gilead was allotted to the Levites, and in the time of Solomon it was the seat of one of his purveyors.[1] "To him pertained the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead, and the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls and brazen bars." His territory would thus extend as far north as the Lejah, and es Salt would, therefore, be too far to the south of the natural line of

[1] Deut. iv. 43; Josh. xx. 8; xxi. 38; 1 Chron. vi. 80; 1 Kings iv. 13.

communication which must have existed at that time between Jerusalem, Gilead, and "the region of Argob."

Nothing is heard of Ramoth-gilead after the reign of Solomon for about one hundred years, and then Ahab, the king of Israel, proposes to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to "go up" and "take it out of the hand of [Ben-hadad II.] the king of Syria."[1] The combined attack failed; Ahab was mortally wounded in his chariot, "and died at even. And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country."[2] A few years later, "Ahaziah, the king of Judah, went with Joram, the son of Ahab, to war against Hazael, king of Syria in Ramoth-gilead."[3] King Joram was wounded by the Syrians, and went back to be healed of his wounds in Jezreel; yet it appears that he took Ramoth-gilead, and was able to keep it, for immediately after the battle we read that Jehu and "the captains of the host" were in possession of the city.[4] Elisha the prophet sent to Ramoth-gilead and anointed Jehu king of Israel. "So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel. And there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied and said, I see a company, and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously."[5]

In all those Biblical notices of the battles around Ramoth-gilead mention is made of chariots; not only do they take part in the contests, but the kings and the captains come and go in chariots. Those battles could not have been fought at es Salt, nor even in its immediate vicinity, for the region for several miles around is too rough and mountainous for the use of chariots, and this fact, amongst others already mentioned, tends to invalidate the claim of es Salt to be the modern representative of the ancient Ramoth-gilead. These objections to es Salt have led to the belief that we must look elsewhere for the site of Ramoth-gilead, and to the conclusion that it must have been north of the river Jabbok.

Ramoth-gilead has been placed by some at Gerasa, a city of the Decapolis, and the modern Jerash; and by numerous citations from the Bible, the Talmud, and other authorities, Dr. Merrill has sought

[1] 1 Kings xxii. 3, 4. [2] 1 Kings xxii. 29-36. [3] 2 Kings viii. 28.
[4] 2 Kings ix. 14, 15, and 5. [5] 2 Kings ix. 1-10, 16-20.

to prove that the identification is correct. The region around Jerash accords better than that in the vicinity of es Salt with the requirements of some of the important events that occurred at Ramoth-gilead. Jerash "would be suitable for a city of refuge," says Dr. Merrill, "because it was on one of the main routes which would be kept open, according to the command in Deuteronomy xix. 3. For the same reason it would be an appropriate point at which to station a commissariat officer who was to command Eastern Gilead and Bashan. There chariots could be used, as we learn they were extensively in two notable campaigns," and the ancient Jewish testimony would be verified respecting the cities of refuge, for Jerash is almost exactly opposite to Shechem or Nâblus.[1]

We make rather a late start; what is the cause of the delay?

South of es Salt we shall not find a market where our exhausted supply of provisions can be replenished, and, therefore, our cook has been busy since early morning purchasing from the miserable shops in the town whatever was available for his department. But as the ride to 'Ammân is only one of five or six hours, the detention will occasion us no serious inconvenience.

We are now under the protection of the 'Adwân, and Goblân, the sheikh of that tribe, has sent his son, Fahd, and his cousin, 'Ali, to act as our guards and guides from es Salt through the region of the Belka, which they claim as their special domain.

Let us stop and water our horses at this noble fountain of 'Ain Jeidûr, and fill our water bottles; for though in the spring there is far too much water along some parts of the route for the comfort of either horse or rider, all ephemeral streams are now dried up, and we will not find a drop of water until we reach the Jabbok, which flows between the ruins of 'Ammân.

Having climbed the steep path which winds its way over slippery limestone rocks up the profound gorge of Wady Jeidûr, and reached this elevated plateau above and east of es Salt, the prospect over the southern portion of "the land of Gilead" appears to be boundless, stretching away southward to the horizon.

I have traversed large parts of that vast region, which appears from here like a great rolling plain, without an inhabited village

[1] East of the Jordan, p. 290.

or even a ruin in sight. The country, however, is far from level. Deep valleys descend in various directions, north and east to the Jabbok, and west and south-west to the Jordan and the Dead Sea, and the hill-sides, in some places, are covered with noble oak woods. The soil is generally fertile, and broad fields of wheat and barley promise abundant harvests. On one occasion I passed through the region from 'Ammân to 'Arâk el Emîr, on my way to the latter place. The path led southward from 'Ammân, through the green vale of the Jabbok, for about a mile, and then turned westward at a point where some ancient ruins attract attention. About half a mile farther on up the valley the stream of the Jabbok is crossed by a very low and broad Roman bridge of three arches.

Another mile brought us to the large pool where the Jabbok rises silently out of the bed of the wady. Around the pool are the foundations of ancient walls, and west of it the valley is dry, even in the spring of the year. That pool, therefore, is the true fountain-head and the real source of the Jabbok, and it is only about two miles to the south-west of 'Ammân. From the valley we ascended the western hills, and continued our ride over a high rolling plateau stretching for many miles to the south and east, but treeless and entirely deserted. It has been "the battle-ground of the Bedawîn tribes in that region for several generations." After crossing that plateau we came to an inconsiderable ruin called Khirbet Sâr, where are "the remains of a mausoleum with arches, also a square tower of hard flinty stone." Dr. Merrill and others identify Khirbet Sâr with the ancient Jazer mentioned in the thirty-second chapter of Numbers and elsewhere, and the plateau west of 'Ammân with "the land of Jazer," "which the children of Reuben and Gad asked for because it was a place for cattle."[1]

Immediately beyond Khirbet Sâr we began to descend into Wady es Seir by a very steep path, through a magnificent forest of large oak-trees. That valley is very beautiful, and the mountains rise higher and higher on either side, covered to their summits with thick groves of evergreen oaks, terebinths, and other trees. Having reached the lively stream at the bottom of the valley, we followed along its banks for several miles until our at-

[1] East of the Jordan, pp. 404, 405, 484.

tention was called to what appeared to be the front of a house, with a door and several windows, all hewn in the perpendicular cliff high up the south side of the wady. We had not the time to ascend to it, but Corporal Phillips, who was sent by Captain Warren to examine it, while encamped near Khirbet Sâr, gives the following description of it:

"The rock is scarped, and there are seven windows — the four upper ones have a cross-bar to them cut out of the rock, the three below are plain. There is a narrow door at the bottom; inside, the chamber is about twelve feet square, and divided into two by a wall running up the centre; there were originally three floors, of which only two cornices remain for supporting the joists; on the upper one pieces of wood are now resting, on which the shepherds make their beds. On each floor are seven rows of pigeon-holes cut in the walls on every side; they are triangular in form." Captain Warren calls it "a rock-tomb," but it differs essentially from all such tombs in this country, and its remarkable façade, seen at a distance, bears a certain resemblance to that of the rock-hewn chambers at Petra. It was occupied by some Bedawîn Arabs, whose wild appearance and suspicious actions were not very assuring, and our guide supposed that they were robbers.

About an hour farther on in the valley below that singular rock-tomb or dwelling, the mountain recedes on the north side of the wady, leaving a large open space in the form of an amphitheatre, commanding a wide prospect westward, and surrounded on the north, east, and south by wooded hills, cavernous cliffs, and jagged crags of limestone rock. That rock-bound amphitheatre or elevated platform is about two thousand five hundred feet above the Dead Sea, and the rugged site is now called 'Arâk el Emîr, the crag of the prince. The south-western part of it was once occupied by "the strong castle" of Hyrcanus, a Jewish prince of the Maccabean family, who "retired beyond Jordan and there abode, because of the jealousy and hatred of his brethren." He built a castle at 'Arâk el Emîr, and there "he ended his life by slaying himself with his own hand."

We are indebted to Josephus for all we know about that castle, the construction of which he thus describes: "Hyrcanus erect-

ed a strong castle, and built it entirely of white stone, to the very roof; and had animals of a prodigious magnitude engraved upon it. He also drew around it a great and deep canal of water. He also made caves of many furlongs in length, by hollowing a rock that was over against him, and then he made large rooms in it, some for feasting, and some for sleeping and living in. He introduced also a vast quantity of waters, which ran along it, and which was very delightful and ornamental in the court. But still he made the entrances at the mouth of the caves so narrow that no more than one person could enter by them at once; and the reason why he built them after that manner was a good one; it was for his own preservation, lest he should be besieged by his brethren, and run the hazard of being caught by them. Moreover, he built courts of greater magnitude than ordinary, which he adorned with vastly large gardens. And when he had brought the place to this state he named it Tyre. This place is between Arabia and Judea, beyond Jordan, not far from the country of Hesbon."[1]

Did you find that the existing remains at 'Arâk el Emîr corresponded to the description of them given by Josephus?

The great canal which Hyrcanus drew around the palace may yet be found buried under the accumulated rubbish, and the caves are still there in the rocks over against the palace; but the statement that they were many furlongs in length is a gross exaggeration. The ruins of the palace itself are considerable. It stood upon a raised platform in the south-western part of the rocky amphitheatre, "in the middle of a walled enclosure of ten or twelve acres, of which the traces can still be seen. The position and scenery around are beautiful, and Hyrcanus was a wise man to choose so charming a spot for his enforced retirement. The glen to the north-east, above Wady Seir, the cliffs, the sides of the hills covered with oaks and terebinths, with the undulating verdant slopes below [and the purling stream flowing through the midst, fringed with dark-green oleander-bushes in full bloom], make a lovely landscape," peculiarly characteristic of this region east of the Jordan.[2]

"The entrance gate-way [of the palace was] built of large stones

[1] Ant. xii. 4, 11.

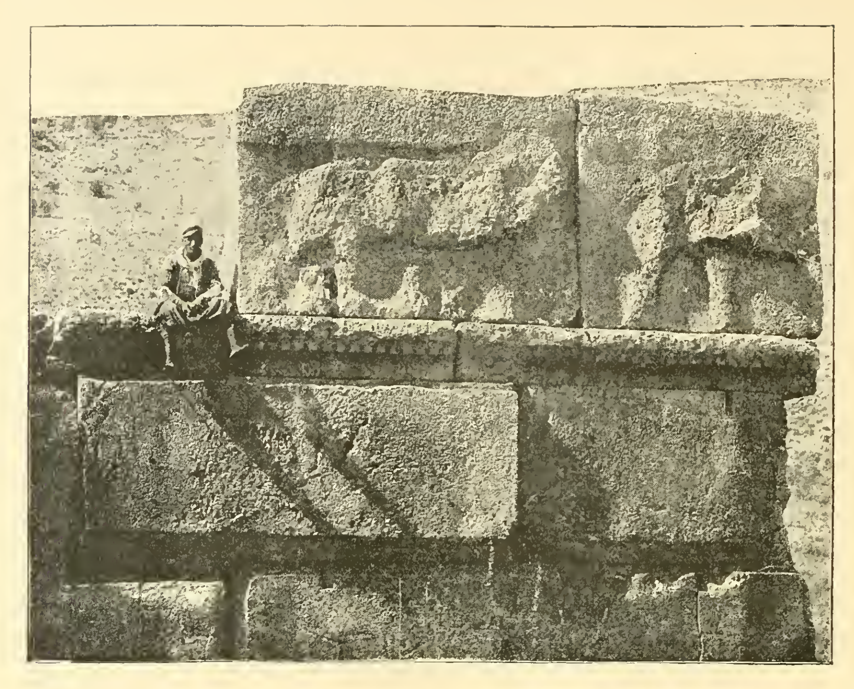
[2] Expedition East of the Jordan. By the Rev. A. E. Northey.

squared and finished with the Jewish bevel. ['The frieze of this portal is Ionic, and is formed of enormous slabs of stone. One of which was twenty feet by ten.'][1] The aperture of the gate was twelve feet wide; one stone measured eleven feet in length by five feet in width. From this gate-way to the castle was a raised causeway, with some [large] perforated stones [as if for bars or rails] placed on it at intervals." The palace itself measures about one hundred and twenty-five feet from north to south, and sixty-five feet from east to west. It faced the east, and had, according to Canon Tristram, "a colonnade in front, and there are many fragments of pillars, some fluted and others plain, strewn about. Only a portion of the front wall has stood the test of more than two thousand years, but this is in wonderful preservation. It is composed of great slabs. One in situ measured fifteen feet [long], by ten feet high; another, prostrate, was twenty feet long.

"These stones have been bound together, not by lime or clamps, but by numerous square knobs or bolts, left in the different sides of the stone, which fitted tightly into corresponding sockets cut to receive them in the next block. Many loop-holes for archery provided for the defence of the place. About twenty feet from the basement runs a beading of Doric ornaments, and above this is a colossal frieze, some twelve feet high, formed of enormous slabs, with lions sculptured in alto-relievo of colossal size. [They are about six feet high and nine feet long.] Over these has been a Doric entablature and frieze, but this has been thrown down, as also have been many of the lions. It seems probable that earthquakes alone have caused their overthrow, for human agency could scarcely have overturned without destroying them. The building must have been a strange medley architecturally, for we noticed many Ionic cornices and Egyptian capitals of the Ptolemaic order with the palm leaf."[2]

About half a mile from Kŭsr el 'Abd, the palace of the black slave, as the castle is now called, are the rock-dwellings and stables which Hyrcanus caused to be excavated in the limestone cliffs. "Great chambers," says Mr. Northey, "have been hollowed out, perhaps originally natural cavities, but greatly enlarged and shaped by

[1] Land of Israel, p. 534.   [2] Land of Israel, pp. 534. 535.

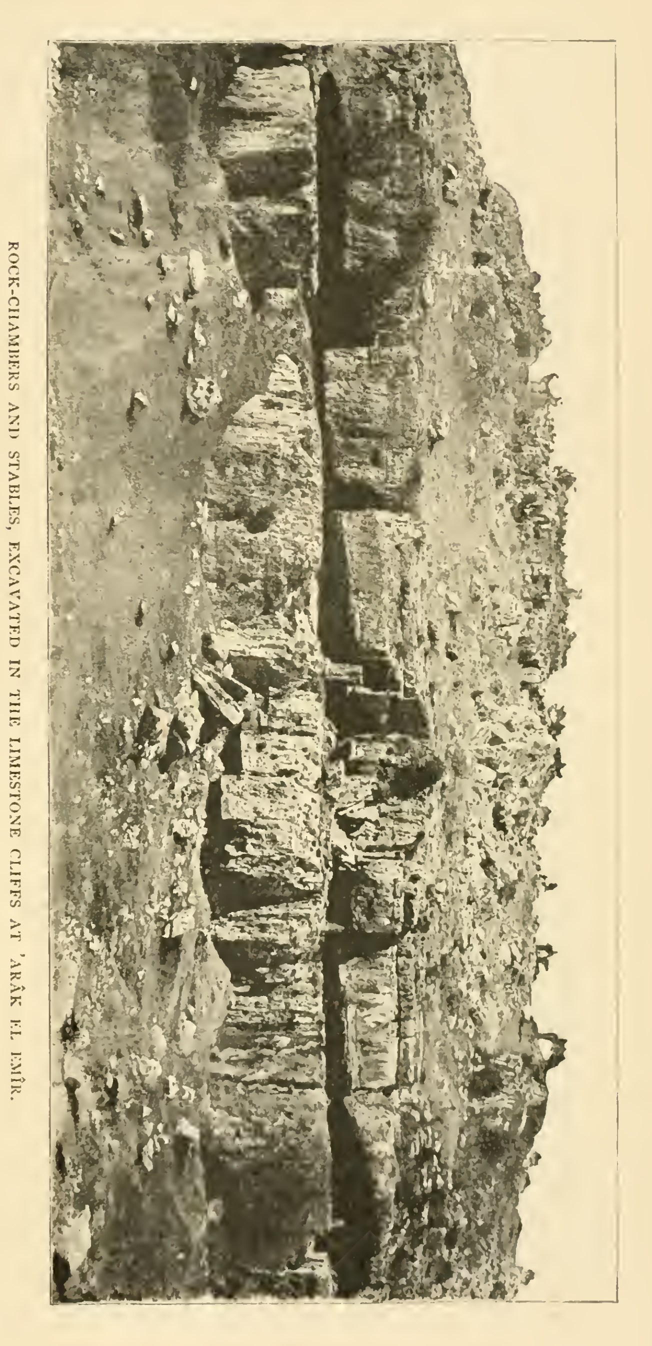


COLOSSAL LIONS ON THE FAÇADE OF THE PALACE OF HYRCANUS.

artificial means. One which we measured was forty-five by thirty-five feet, and about twenty feet high; another fifty-four feet by thirty-six feet, and twenty-eight feet high. To each of these chambers there were two openings: one a kind of square window, twelve feet high by six feet wide; the other a rough, square door-way below. At the side of the entrances was an inscription in ancient Samaritan, the same in both cases. Beyond these was another chamber, longer, narrower, and lower, which had been used as a stable. It is ninety-six feet in length; round the sides is a range of mangers cut out of the solid rock, about three feet high.

"Close by is a round cistern, twelve feet in diameter, as well as many other caves and passages, the entrance to some of which was purposely made by Hyrcanus as difficult as possible. Two large square stones, standing up edgeways, with a checker pattern on them, puzzled us, as they have puzzled every one who has seen them." Below those caverns in the cliffs is a large platform or

an elevated terrace, on which there are the remains of public edifices and the ruins of private residences, most of which appear to have been surrounded by a wall; and a flight of steps, cut in the rock, led down from that terrace towards Wady es Seir. On the hill-side to the south-west, between those remains and the castle, are the ruins of houses, and fragments of a few columns, and the traces of an aqueduct. "Here," according to Dr. Merrill, "was one of the largest reservoirs in the country; it was almost a lake, and when full of water, even ships could easi-



ROCK-CHAMBERS AND STABLES, EXCAVATED IN THE LIMESTONE CLIFFS AT 'ARÂK EL EMÎR.

ly have floated in it. Nowhere else have I seen a wall of such strength as the one to the south and east of this reservoir."[1]

The cliffs in which those excavations were made abound with various kinds of fossils in perfect preservation, and one might collect specimens enough at 'Arâk el Emîr to fill a considerable cabinet; for the rocks, and some of the blocks of stone amongst the ruins, are literally a mass of curious petrifactions. I can corroborate Mr. Northey's description of the oleanders in that vicinity, both as to size, abundance, and beautiful flowers. Along Wady Sha'ib, midway between 'Arâk el Emîr and es Salt, I saw oleanders which had grown into large trees. Some were nearly two feet in circumference, and more than thirty feet high.

From the top of the ridge north-west of 'Arâk el Emîr, we had an impressive view of the Dead Sea, which appeared surprisingly near, though in reality it was more than two thousand five hundred feet below us. From that magnificent outlook we had a long and winding descent into Wady Sha'ib, which we followed northward for several miles, and then climbed the lofty mountain south of es Salt. 'Arâk el Emîr is nearly four hours distant from es Salt, most of the way through a rough, wild, and deserted region. We passed several small encampments of Bedawîn, but there is not an inhabited village nor important ruin along the entire route.

Our guide found a pitchfork in one of the caverns at 'Arâk el Emîr, where tibn, or straw, is stored by the Bedawîn, which he took possession of without scruple. But when we came near the first Arab encampment he was afraid that some of them would claim it and give him a thrashing. He begged to be allowed to conceal the pitchfork in one of the loads on our mules, but that I would not permit him to do, so he left us and made a long détour to escape observation. He had not expected to find any Bedawîn camps along that unfrequented pathway.

It was impossible to convince him that he was guilty of theft; he stoutly maintained that he had a right to appropriate to his own use all such stray plunder. The guide was a Christian from es Salt, and yet, when we came to the Muhammedan Mukâm of Neby Sha'ib, in the wady of the same name, where votive offerings

[1] East of the Jordan, p. 107.

to the saint, and ploughs, ox-yokes, goads, and other agricultural implements lay around the sacred tomb without any protection, he did not dare to steal a single article. The resentful wrath of that Moslem saint is greatly feared by all sects, and no one will venture to take anything left for safe-keeping at his tomb.

The grave of Neby Sha'ib has no building over it, nor is it protected by a wall or an enclosure of any kind, and it is nearly concealed by weeds and bushes, which grow in Wady Sha'ib with surprising luxuriance, owing, mainly, to the abundance of water. In all directions noisy brooks come tumbling down the tributary ravines, and swell the stream in the valley into a roaring mountain torrent. I have rarely seen vegetation more luxuriant than in that region. For long distances we had to force our way through patches of golden daises, wild lupins, and thorny thistles nearly as high as our horses, and so thickset as to quite perplex them.

The crops of wheat and barley in many places were as heavy as any I ever saw either in this country or elsewhere. In the valley below and south of es Salt there are numerous flour-mills driven by the stream from the noble fountains which burst forth on all sides in that vicinity, and the region between 'Arâk el Emîr and that town is very beautiful and romantic, and it is not surprising that "the children of Reuben and the children of Gad," who "had a very great multitude of cattle," when they saw the land should have eagerly coveted possession of it.[1]

We have now been riding two hours and a half from es Salt, and may rest a while and lunch under the shelter of that solitary and conspicuous terebinth-tree ahead of us, the only one of its size in this part of our route. When I passed this way in the spring, much of the country was flooded with water, and that beautiful plain of el Bŭk'ah, many hundred feet below us on the left, and surrounded on all sides by high mountains, looked like a lake with large islands in some parts of it. Owing to the abundance of water and the rich pasture, el Bŭk'ah is a favorite camping-ground of the surrounding Bedawîn. Captain Warren passed through it on his way to Jerash from Wady es Seir.

"The view from these hills to the north," he says, "is remarka-

[1] Numb. xxxii. 1.

ble; fifteen hundred feet below us is an oval, depressed plain, nine miles long and six broad, giving about forty-five square miles of the richest meadow-land. It appears to be the dried-up bed of a lake whose waters have cut their way to the Zerka, years ago, by wadies on the north-west side." He found "the plain well cultivated in parts, and elsewhere it swarms with flocks of sheep and goats." There are several ruins on and around el Bŭk'ah, the most important of which are Khirbet el Bâsha, "nearly in the centre of the plain," and Khirbet es Sâfût, "on the side of the hill to the east." At the former are "the remains of an extensive village or town of soft stone, and some vaults," and "the principal object" still remaining in the latter "is a gate-way, eight feet high and seven feet six inches wide, with a lintel over it, called the Gate of 'Ammân; there are bevelled stones about."

El Bŭk'ah is now dry, and the vegetation on that depressed plain has been withered by the long summer heat. The same is true in regard to the region on our right, called Ard el Hemâr, which is clothed with luxuriant pasture in the spring; and the road, now so dusty, is then almost impassable from deep mud.

Our ride for the last hour, since leaving the large tree above the plain of el Bŭk'ah, has been quite featureless; but picturesque hills begin to appear to the north and in the east, and vary the monotony. What is the nature of the country on our left?

Most of it is a rough, barren, and uncultivated region. In company with Dr. Selah Merrill, archæologist of the American Palestine Exploration Society, I came through it from Kŭl'at ez Zerka, some twelve miles north-east of 'Ammân, where the river Zerka, or Jabbok, trends round westward on its way to unite with the Jordan. We had spent the preceding night encamped on a pretty grassy meadow near some large fountains, the second permanent source of the Zerka. Below the fountains the river winds round the base of the ridge on which the castle of ez Zerka is situated, and then begins its headlong descent of three thousand feet to the Ghôr, through abrupt and lofty mountains.

The Jabbok has always formed the natural boundary of the districts north and south of it down to the present day. In the time of Moses it was "the border of the children of Ammon [which]

was strong;" and it now separates the district of the Belka from that of Jebel 'Ajlûn. Kŭl'at ez Zerka stands on the top of the hill, some distance north of those fountains, and is one of the stations of the Haj, or Muhammedan pilgrims, to Mecca. The Haj had been there a short time previous to our visit, and had so effectually swept up every article of food and provender that we could not obtain any barley for the horses nor even an egg for ourselves.

There was a large encampment of Bedawîn on the bank of the river below our tents, and I was quite interested in their movements the next morning. The "elders" having decided, apparently, to emigrate in search of better pasture, the men set off with about eighty camels; but neither they nor their animals carried any of the camp equipage. Immediately after their departure, however, the women in the camp broke out into bustling and noisy activity. As if by magic the tents fell to the ground, were bundled up and placed on the few camels left for that purpose, and in an inconceivably short time the whole caravan passed up the river and disappeared. I had often heard that the Bedawîn, when alarmed by the approach of an enemy, could vanish, tents and all, in a few minutes; and though not hastened by any fear of danger, I was glad to have seen the feat thus accomplished. The women did the whole work, while those "lords of creation," their masters, sauntered off in utter unconcern. There appeared to be very little baggage of any kind to be cared for, and no doubt the women got on all the better for the absence of their lazy lords.

Biblical writers have drawn some affecting imagery from somewhat similar scenes. Thus Jeremiah exclaims: "Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment."[1] And again: "My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and are not: there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains."[2] Our own tabernacles, also, soon disappeared from the green meadow by the river, taking a different route to Yajûz, some four hours to the west of Kŭl'at ez Zerka. There was no lack of paths for some distance in the direction that we took, made, I suppose, by camels and flocks

[1] Jer. iv. 20. [2] Jer. x. 20.

coming down to the Zerka for water. Our guides—the same sheikhs who accompany us now—paid no attention to them, however, but climbed up rocky ridges and plunged into deep ravines, with a recklessness which sometimes we hesitated to follow.

That part of Ammon's inheritance never was, and never could be, cultivated, nor was there any indication of man's presence and work for several miles. What the storks, which so solemnly range over those barren hills, find to eat I cannot imagine; nor what entices thither the partridges, that cackle from the steep cliffs, unless it be the hope of escape from man, their natural enemy. In about two hours a steep climb raised us above the surrounding country into a well-wooded region of fine old oaks, and opened out a prospect of vast extent. We saw not only the ruins of Jerash but the high castle-crowned tell of Sŭlkhad, the volcanic cone of el Kuleib, in Jebel ed Druse, and many other places of interest on the distant plain of el Haurân, and beyond it the snowy summit of Hermon far away to the north.

After leaving that commanding stand-point on the top of the ridge, the country began to assume a less forbidding aspect. The shout of the shepherds and the barking of their dogs gave notice that we were approaching a Bedawîn encampment. The dogs came charging down upon us with loud uproar; but the bark of an Arab dog is worse than his bite, and upon second thought, concluding that discretion was the better part of valor, they kept at a respectful distance and finally fled at our advance.

From that encampment we descended into a well-wooded valley, which inclines towards the south-west. The country improved rapidly, and it was quite refreshing to ride through fine forests of oak and terebinth trees. After riding four hours from Kŭl'at ez Zerka we stopped to rest under the wide-spreading branches and the "shadowing shroud" of the largest and most beautiful terebinths I have ever seen, and our horses regaled themselves upon the exuberant pasture around the trickling fountain of Yajûz.

Yajûz is a singular place, with a name quite unknown to fame; but the ruins scattered about the shallow valley for a mile or more are of considerable importance. Near the large terebinth-trees there are three fountains, or rather holes in the ground, into which

the water collects in sufficient quantity to supply the numerous flocks that gather about them. On the lower side of the fountain farthest south once stood an ornamental structure of some sort, probably a small temple. From the number and size of the blocks, the fragments of columns, capitals, cornices, lintels, and carved stones with various designs, it is evident that the edifice was of Roman construction and of the Corinthian order of architecture.

But the most remarkable structures about Yajûz are the massive walls of three large, open enclosures a short distance to the north-east of the fountains. All three are overshadowed by terebinths of very great size, from ten to fifteen feet in circumference, and of rare beauty of outline. Some of the trees spring from the bottom of the walls, and the largest among them has grown around and lifted up from its position to a considerable height above the ground a stone about two feet square and weighing at least half a ton. Those enclosures seem to be far too wide to have been roofed or vaulted over. The central of the three is about one hundred and forty feet square, and the walls were built of large and well-cut blocks of stone laid up without mortar. The other two enclosures are smaller, and more of the surrounding walls remain standing in their original position.

I have nowhere else seen any structures similar to those, and the character of the work seems to indicate that they are more modern than the ancient town. The interior space is now mainly occupied by the graves of the Bedawîn. The great-grandfather of our guides, a celebrated sheikh, died under one of those terebinth-trees, and his grave is still well preserved, with its inscription, in an open field a little south of the central enclosure. The "family" of our Bedawîn guides owns the land in common at Yajûz, and Sheikh Fahd performed the customary religious ceremony at the grave of his great ancestor, whose name was Nimr el 'Adwân.

There is a fourth enclosure on the hill-side, about forty rods to the eastward of the three others. It is smaller, but built of the same large blocks of stone, and like them it is overshadowed by great terebinth-trees. The ruins of the town itself cover a large space on both sides of the shallow valley which declines gradually towards the south-east. The houses on the left side are prostrate,

but on the opposite slope of the hill many of them are still standing, and all were vaulted over, though in a rough and irregular manner. In one I found a Bedawîn family living, the only resident inhabitants of that once large town; other houses are used to store tibn and grain. Short columns lie here and there among the ruins, and the outline of what may have been a small church can still be traced. Rock-cut tombs of various forms abound, and there are many chambers sunk in the face of the rock as if for the storing of grain; but there are no inscriptions on the ruins to throw any light upon the history of that remarkable place.

Dr. Merrill found reservoirs at Yajûz, "with substantial roofs supported upon arches;" also "the remains of one temple and two churches." He saw a large disc or millstone, eight feet in diameter, lying in one of the extensive quarries, and "a great many square stones laid out ready for use; but for some reason they were left, and remained untouched to the present day."[1]

Besides Sheikh Fahd we had with us two other sheikhs of the 'Adwân; and they turned over a large block of stone to show us the battered outline of a human figure sculptured upon it, in regard to which they gave the following account: The figure was that of a woman, appropriately draped and of life-size. It was quite perfect when first discovered, but the sheikhs themselves broke it up and mutilated it, after the famous Moabite stone had been similarly dealt with by the Beni Sakhr at Dîhbân or Dibon. In excuse for that act of vandalism they said that they had heard that a well-known person in Jerusalem had negotiated with a sheikh of their tribe to carry away that statue, without the permission of the other sheikhs. Fearing a quarrel among themselves similar to that between the Beni Sakhr about the Moabite stone, they went to Yajûz in the night and broke up and mutilated the statue.

Our guides were of the party, and they showed us the head, the feet, and part of an arm, all of which had belonged to that statue. They also turned over other large blocks of stone, upon one of which was an eagle with outstretched wings, and on two others were the sculptured figures of lions in tolerable preservation. Those sculptured fragments only increase the interest in Yajûz, and it is

[1] East of the Jordan, pp. 273, 274.

to be hoped that future explorers will be able to discover the ancient name and former history of that remarkable town.

Yajûz, then, has not been identified with any Biblical site?

I believe not; in fact but few travellers have either seen or mentioned it. Dr. Merrill thinks "there are good reasons for regarding this place as the ancient Roman town Gadda," mentioned in the Tabula Peutingeriana as thirteen miles from Philadelphia or Rabbath-amman, the present 'Ammân.[1]

About an hour's ride west of Yajûz, on the road to es Salt, are the ruins of another Roman town. The site is now called el Jebeiha, which at once suggests the name Jogbehah, a fenced city built by the children of Gad before they accompanied their brethren to the conquest of the country west of the Jordan.[2] The situation of the town, on a broad hill-top, is a very fine one, commanding a magnificent outlook over a large part of the territory of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. Hermon, in the far-off distance, and the ruins of Jerash nearer at hand are again visible, and the beautiful little plain of el Bŭk'ah lies almost at one's feet. Though far older than Yajûz, the ruins at Jebeiha are mostly buried beneath the surface, and there are very few remains above ground. Foundations of buildings, numerous low, massive vaults, and demijohn-shaped cisterns are found here and there on the top of the hill, but the remains are not so extensive as those at Yajûz.

As we descend towards 'Ammân we shall see many indications that this region was once highly cultivated and densely inhabited, but none of the existing ruins of ancient towns and dilapidated towers are of sufficient importance to merit even a passing notice, so we will not turn aside to examine them.

We have entered a winding wady, which sinks deeper and deeper every moment below the general level of the country, and the cliffs on either side present a very curious appearance.

The rock strata have been upheaved, distorted, twisted, and crumpled like the leaves of a dog-eared book. We are near the end of our day's ride, and high up on our left you can see the massive walls of the castle at 'Ammân. This valley is called Wady el Haddâdeh, and there is a similar one on the north-west

[1] East of the Jordan, p. 227. [2] Numb. xxxii. 35.

side of the citadel-hill, where the strata are equally contorted and remarkable. In the spring, water trickles from under the rocks and cliffs in this valley, and the little rills soon swell into a noisy torrent, rushing eastward to join the pretty river that flows through the ruins at 'Ammân. We shall find our tents pitched on the north-west side of the river, and nearly opposite the great theatre, one of the principal attractions of the place.

No one can visit 'Ammân without being deeply impressed with its total destruction and utter loneliness. I have come to it from different directions, and the impression is always the same. The traveller sees nothing along the way hither that can in the slightest degree prepare his mind for the melancholy desolation and oppressive silence that brood over the prostrate ruins of this once "royal city." There is still time before dark to take a general survey of the ruins of this "city of waters," and to visit the citadel on the summit of the hill directly above it.

Of the "Rabbath of the children of Ammon," where the iron bedstead of Og was kept, there are no remains above ground to be examined. What the astonished traveller now sees belonged to the Græco-Roman city of Philadelphia. There is no doubt, however, as to the identity of the place itself with both those ancient cities; and it is marked out by nature for the site of a great capital. These are some of its advantages: a strong position, shut in by high mountains and surrounded by deep valleys; an abundance of good water flowing through a narrow vale from the south-west to the north-east, with a sufficient space on the left bank of the stream for edifices of all kinds, public and private; while a large isolated hill, some three hundred feet high, overhangs it on the north-west and north, affording on its summit a broad platform for a large and almost unassailable citadel, and fertile hills and broad plains lie around it in all directions to supply its inhabitants with many of the necessaries of life.

Philadelphia occupied not only the narrow vale on the left bank of the little river, but most of the private dwellings, erected upon arched vaults, rose tier above tier up the steep slope of the citadel-hill. Many of those vaults are nearly perfect, but the houses have all been thrown down by successive earthquake shocks, and the

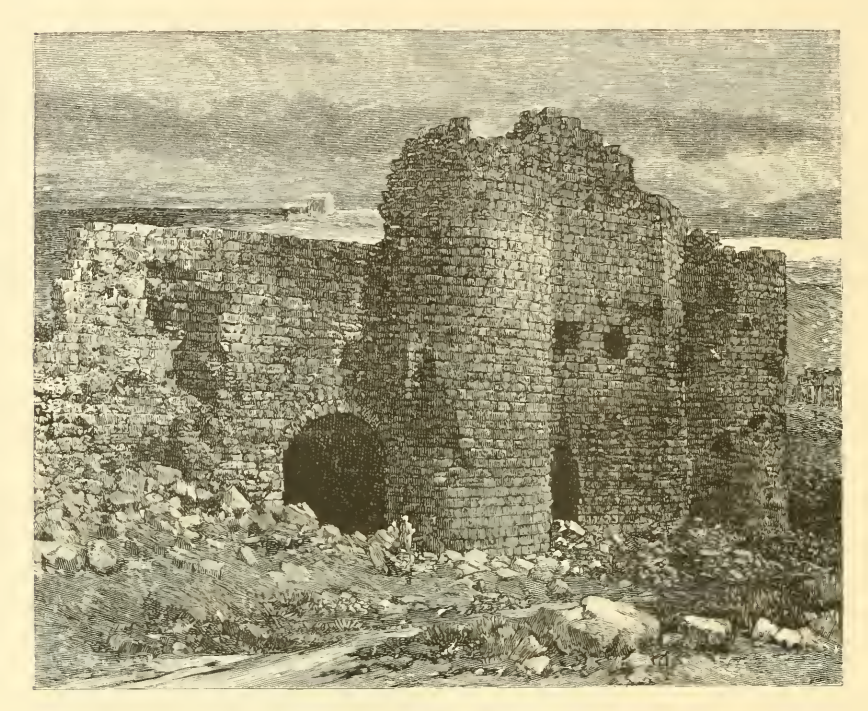
entire hill-side is one confused mass of shapeless ruins. Commencing our survey of the ruined city from the extreme southwest, the first structure that especially attracts our attention is a tomb or small temple. It stands, isolated, in the midst of this green meadow, through which glides the little river of 'Ammân. The temple was square, with massive walls, and Corinthian pilasters at the corners, surmounted by an elaborate cornice, most of which has fallen. It was circular within, and had shell-shaped niches and arched windows profusely and elegantly carved. An ornamental frieze supported a domed roof, but it was thrown down long ago, and only a few layers of well-cut stone of the lower tiers of masonry now remain.



RUINED TEMPLE OR TOMB.

On the rising ground at the northern end of the meadow are several large edifices, the walls of which are partly standing. The first is a rectangular building about two hundred and fifty feet long and one hundred and twenty-five feet wide, and near it is another nearly two hundred feet long and one hundred and twenty feet wide. It was divided into two unequal parts by a wall, and had three entrances and four windows, with rounded arches; and near the north-west corner there is a square tower with a spiral

stairway within of thirty-three steps. From the top of it there is a fine view of the valley of 'Ammân, with its striking ruins and pretty stream, for a mile or more towards the north. The first of



EXTERIOR OF AN IMPOSING STRUCTURE.

those buildings may have been a great caravansary, and the second was probably a large church, afterwards converted into a mosk. Between those buildings and the stream are the prostrate walls of other edifices difficult to explore or describe.

East of the mosk, and built upon the bank above the stream, is the basilica. Within, it was about one hundred and fifty feet long and eighty feet wide, and it had a nave and two side aisles, with a small apse at the east end. The interior of the basilica appears to have been frescoed or plastered, to judge from the many small holes in the stones in that portion of the apse and side walls which still remains standing. Externally the basilica must have resembled a strong fortress, for the eastern wall was

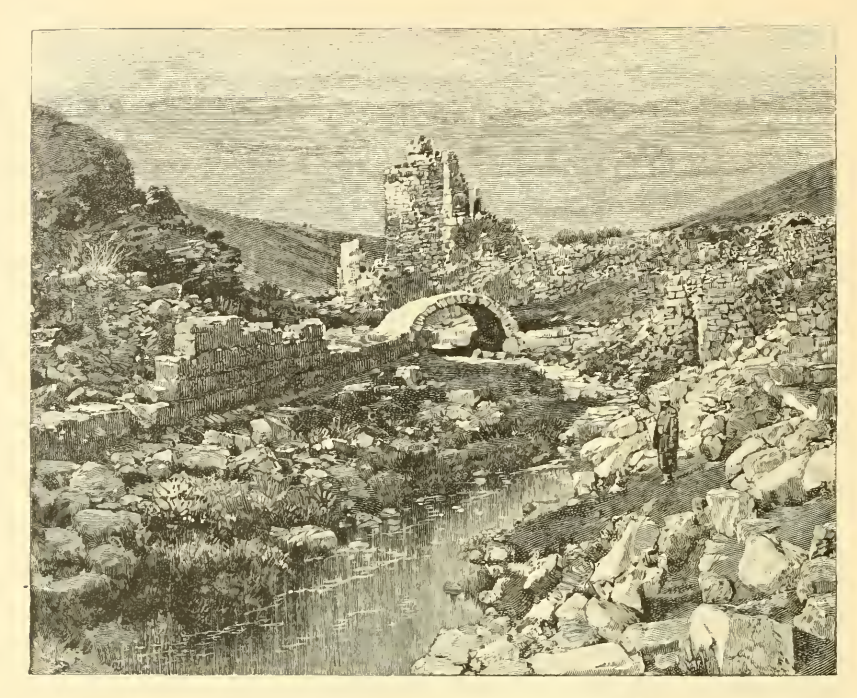
very massive, and rose to a great height above the stream. North of the basilica are the remains of a building with pointed arches, and beyond it are the ruins of the most imposing structure at 'Ammân. It consists of curved walls, round towers, and angular bastions of great thickness and strength, towering above the left bank of the stream, and completely dominating the entire city.

Near one of the round towers is an arched passage which served to convey the winter torrent from Wady el Haddâdeh through the town and under the walls to the river. From the existing remains and the crumbling ruins of another round tower, this structure appears to have extended for some distance farther north, and along the bank of the stream. Externally the walls were constructed of well-dressed, bevelled stones, and within, there were semicircular and arched recesses with two rows of



INTERIOR OF AN IMPOSING STRUCTURE.

niches between, and there are numerous small holes along the walls, above and below the niches, for the support of the stucco or plaster, which covered a part, at least, of the surface of the entire structure. Two columns without capitals still remain standing

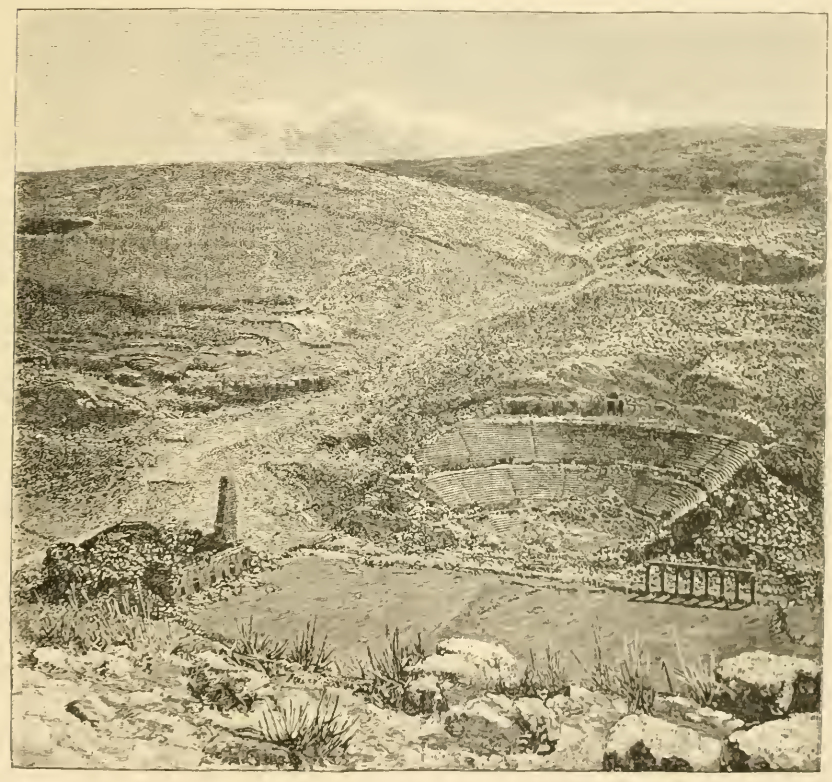


ROMAN BRIDGE, AND BANKS OF THE STREAM.

nearly opposite the highest part of the structure, and the shafts of three others are a short distance to the right, but they have been moved out of the perpendicular by the shock of earthquakes.

Farther north is the round arch of a Roman bridge still spanning the stream. It is a plain semicircle of single stones, without abutments or parapets, and appears to have been the only one in the city. The numerous blocks of stones, and fragments of columns lying in the bed of the stream, however, afford easy stepping-stones, so that it is not difficult to get across in many places. The banks of the stream both above and below the bridge were lined with masonry, and vaulted over in some places; but if the bed of it was ever paved, the winter torrents have long since carried away the stones with which the pavement was constructed. The stream is full of minnows and small fishes, which the Bedawîn sometimes catch by throwing stones at them—a very primitive way of fishing.

Let us cross the bridge and visit the great theatre nearly a quarter of a mile to the north-east of it. The wall which lined the right bank of the stream is almost perfect, and here on our left are the ruins of an old mill, and beyond them the shapeless remains of some undefined structure. This theatre is the largest and best preserved of its kind in the country. It was almost entirely excavated in the side of the hill, and partly hewn out of the overhanging cliff, and the seats or benches were made of trap-rock, which never disintegrates. The front of the theatre was about three hundred feet long, and the walls, including the corridors, nearly ninety feet thick.



THEATRE AND ODEON AT 'AMMÂN.

Within, the arena was over one hundred and twenty feet long and about one hundred feet in diameter. There were more than forty-three rows of benches, rising upward from the arena in grand and

ever widening semicircles, divided into sections by several flights of steps, and separated into three tiers by broad passages which communicated with arched corridors running round the entire semicircular structure under the seats in each tier.

Resting thus against the hill, says Mr. Northey, "nothing can exceed the grandeur of the large theatre, crowned by the rocks out of which its semicircle has been hewn. With its tiers of seats, its passages, corridors, galleries, and vestibules, it must have been a splendid building, capable of holding eight thousand persons."

In front of the theatre was the forum, over three hundred feet in length and about two hundred feet broad, surrounded by a colonnade of fifty or more Corinthian columns. Eight of those columns are still standing, with their entablature, opposite the south-western wall of the theatre, and parts of four others, at an angle to them, extend along the south side of the forum. Nearly opposite the north-western wall of the theatre, and fronting the north-eastern part of the forum, was the Odeon. Portions of the walls and the three entrances in front, with their lintels and round arches, remain, but the roof has fallen, the semicircular interior is a mass of shapeless ruins, and the benches are buried under heaps of rubbish and piles of square stones. The Odeon, however, is the best-preserved ruin at 'Ammân, and it appears to have been a good specimen of a small theatre in the Corinthian style of architecture.

The northern wall of the city extended from cliff to cliff about forty rods north of the Odeon, and the gate-way on the left bank of the stream is well defined. It led out of the street of columns which ran parallel to the cliffs of the citadel-hill, and not far from the hill itself. Half a mile farther north, near the spot where the ravine on the northern side of the citadel-hill unites with the river vale, is a remarkable tomb having an ornamental façade not unlike that of a triumphal arch, with small side entrances; but the interior is merely a large, rock-cut, sepulchral chamber with several sarcophagi in situ arranged along the sides.

We will now recross the bridge and climb the steep hill above the city, in order to examine the remains of the citadel and the ruins of some remarkable structures upon its summit. This comparatively level space on the left, between the bridge and the

citadel-hill, is strewn with confused masses of ruins, but none of them appear to be of any importance. On the right, and close to the foot of the hill, are the ruins of a large temple. Part of the rear wall, ornamented by a large square niche, with a smaller, shell-shaped one above it, and surmounted by a beautiful cornice with elegant broken pediments, supported by two Corinthian columns with their entablatures, still remains standing. That temple faced the east, and in front of it are the broken shafts of a few columns. With its portico and spacious court that temple appears to have extended almost to the main street, lined with columns and running northwards, on an elevated terrace, parallel with the river, until it reached the north gate of the city.



REAR WALL OF A LARGE TEMPLE.

Look well to your footsteps as we ascend the steep hill-side, so completely covered with the remains of prostrate houses, lest you stumble over the ruined walls or tumble into one of the broken vaults upon which many of the private residences of this ancient city were built. Like those at es Salt, these houses rose tier above tier, the roofs of those below forming the courts of the ones above them, and so on up this steep declivity to the top of the hill.

But they have all been thrown down in an overwhelming mass by the shock of earthquakes, and nothing now remains of them but some foundations and a few side walls. As in the case of el Busrah or Bozrah, so here "judgment has come" upon Rabbath-ammon, and the Lord has stretched "out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness."[1]

And now that we have reached the watch-tower or guard-house on the top of the ridge, you can see that the hill extends from south-west to north-east and is almost a mile in length, with a broad, irregular platform on the summit having somewhat the shape of a right angle. The deep Wady Haddâdeh protects it on the south-west, and it is defended by a profound ravine on the north-west and north. The only available point of attack or approach is along the narrow neck of land which connects it with the hill farther west. Broad, level fields extend northward from the ditch or moat near the north-east angle of that platform, along the top of the ridge, and the surface declines rapidly to the river vale, about half a mile beyond the north wall of the city. This square watch-tower stands on the eastern side of the platform and overlooks the entire city, the river, and the valley nearly three hundred feet below. A short distance west of it we shall find the foundations and prostrate columns of a large and noble temple.

"According to our measurements," says Dr. Merrill, this temple "was fifty feet wide by one hundred and sixty feet long. It had four columns at each end and eight on each side," and was, therefore, a peripteral temple surrounded by twenty columns. They were "forty-five feet high, and the capitals were of rich Corinthian work. The columns were six feet in diameter, and on the end of two sections was engraved, in very large letters, [a Greek word which] signifies 'from a present, or gift,' showing that the column was a contribution from some wealthy or benevolent person. Around the entire building there appears to have extended an architrave which was three feet wide, and under a portion of it at least was a Greek inscription, beautifully carved, in two lines, the single letters being six inches in length. The stones composing this architrave were badly broken when the building fell, and some

[1] Isa. xxxiv. 11.



PERIPTERAL TEMPLE WITHIN THE CITADEL.

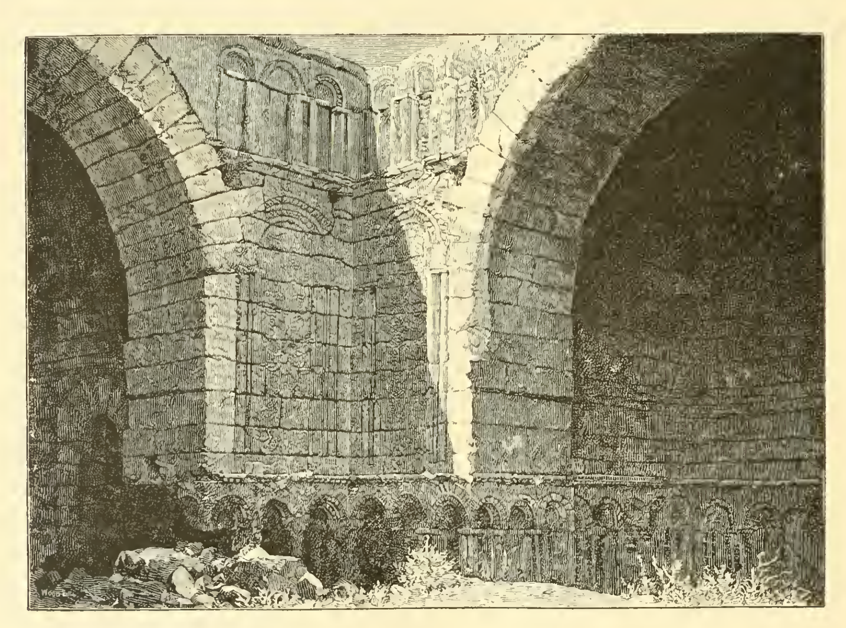
of them are covered in the earth, while others, half buried, project from the ground; the inscription [upon the architrave] is much mutilated and can be copied only in fragments."[1]

This low, square structure, a short distance to the north-west of the temple, and half buried by a mass of rubbish, is supposed to have been a church or a mosk. It was first described in detail by Canon Tristram as "a perfect Greek church of the late Byzantine type," and it has since been carefully examined by Captain Conder, of the Palestine Exploration Fund. "The beautiful little Moslem building on the citadel hill," he says, "is one of the most interesting monuments of the town. It appears to be an erection all of one period, although the south wall has been injured and perhaps partly rebuilt. The building measures eighty-five and a half feet north and south by eighty and a half feet east and west. It has a central court, thirty-three feet square, and an arched chamber leads back from each side of the court, measuring about eighteen feet either way. There are four other chambers in the four corners,

[1] East of the Jordan, pp. 264, 265.

and on the north-west was a staircase to the roof. The total height is twenty-seven feet, and it [does] not appear that the central court had ever been roofed in.

"The interest of this building consists in the architectural style of its details. Each alcove, or chamber, opening into the court has a fine arch of peculiar shape, being very nearly semicircular, but having that same slightly elliptical form at the top which can be recognized in the arches of the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem. On each side of the arch is a panel decorated with bas-reliefs in stone. These represent arches supported on slender coupled pillars. The arch in this case is represented of horseshoe form and decorated with a dog-tooth moulding. It stands on a sort of cornice supported by three small sculptured arches, each with



DECORATED ARCHES IN THE CHURCH OR MOSK ON THE CITADEL-HILL.

dwarf twin-pillars. Above the large arch is a second order of these arches, also on dwarf twin-pillars. The spaces under all these arches, between the pillars, are elaborately ornamented with geometric designs which have a somewhat Byzantine appearance. The existence of a mosque in the valley, with round arches, seems

to show that the Moslems already were building here in or before the ninth century, when they first began to use the pointed arch, and as there is no distinctly pointed arch in the building under consideration, we shall in the first instance be inclined to ascribe its erection to the same period."[1]

Beyond this singular and interesting structure, to the north and west, are the remains of the massive walls that protected the citadel in that direction. It appears to have occupied the entire summit of the hill, from the rock-cut moat on the north-east to this steep escarpment on the west, and at those two only accessible points of approach it was very strongly fortified. The walls are almost entire and are very thick. They were constructed of large blocks of masonry without cement, and the foundations were laid along and "a little below the crest of the hill, and appear not to have risen much above the level of its summit."

There were several large and deep cisterns, besides the temple and other structures, enclosed within the walls of the citadel, and it was almost entirely dependent upon them for its supply of water. "Immediately north of the citadel," says Captain Conder, "we found a great underground reservoir, having at its mouth a concealed passage, which might perhaps have once led to the interior of the fortress. This passage may be that of which Polybius speaks as being used by the defenders of the citadel during the siege by Antiochus the Great in 218 B.C. The secret was betrayed by a prisoner, which led to the surrender of the garrison."[2]

Leaving the citadel near the south-western angle of the wall, and just above the narrow neck of land which connects it with the hill farther west, we will descend into Wady Haddâdeh and find our way as best we can over and among broken columns and ruined houses back to our tents on the left bank of Moîet 'Ammân, as the river is now called.

September 27th. Evening.

The chief Biblical interest in Rabbath-ammon centres about its capture by Joab and David; but it was the capital of the Ammonites in the time of Moses, several centuries before the reign of David. Its name appears in subsequent history and prophecy,

[1] Heth and Moab, p. 157–159. [2] Heth and Moab, p. 156.

and in such connections as clearly to imply that it had regained its independence, and had again become the chief city of the Ammonite nation. For centuries after it disappears, and during several succeeding centuries it re-appears as Philadelphia, but its ancient name was never lost; and here, amid the ruin and desolation of the Græco-Roman city, and after a lapse of more than three thousand years, we find its original name of Rabbath-ammon still preserved in the modern Arabic one of 'Ammân.

In "the story of the conquest of Og, king of Bashan," we find the first mention of "Rabbath of the children of Ammon" as the place where the iron bedstead of that giant king was to be seen: "nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man."[1] Concerning that remarkable couch, Captain Conder suggests that the word "iron" may refer to a throne rather than a bedstead, and that there may have been "a possible connection between Og's throne and some rude stone monument" at Rabbath; and he says: "It was, therefore, very striking to find a single enormous dolmen standing alone in a conspicuous position near Rabbath Ammon, and yet more striking that the top stone measured thirteen feet, or very nearly nine cubits of sixteen inches, in length. The extreme breadth was eleven feet. It seemed to me possible that it is to this solitary monument that the name 'Og's throne' might be attached, and I here give the suggestion for what it is worth."[2]

The Ammonites were the descendants of Lot, the nephew of Abraham, and the kinsmen of the children of Israel. The Hebrews, therefore, did not molest them nor conquer their territory, and Rabbath appears to have remained independent down to the time of David. The Ammonites, however, ultimately became the aggressors, and the immediate cause of the siege of Rabbath by Joab was the shameful treatment of David's ambassadors, sent "to comfort the king of the children of Ammon" on the death of his father. King Hanun "took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments, and sent them away. When David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men" against the Ammonites. Joab defeated

[1] Deut. iii. 11.

[2] Heth and Moab, pp. 155, 156.

them and returned to Jerusalem; and the following year he and all Israel were sent by David, "at the time when kings go forth to battle, and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem."[1]

It is evident, from the record in the eleventh and twelfth chapters of 2d Samuel, that the siege must have lasted about two years, or at least until after the birth of Solomon. During all that time the citadel could obtain water from the river below; but when Joab had captured the lower town, or "the City of Waters," that supply was cut off, and as many of the inhabitants had no doubt escaped to the citadel, the increase of people would quickly exhaust the cisterns, and compel a speedy surrender. Joab understood that, and therefore sent word to David to come and take it, "Lest," said he, "I take the city, and my name be called upon it," as in the marginal reading.

From the intimations in the Biblical narrative, we conclude that there were two cities, one along the river vale, "the City of Waters," and the other upon the summit of the hill above it, and that it was this last which David came to, and fought against and took. It was the great citadel where the king dwelt, and included a large and populous city, and not merely a castle defended by a strong garrison. The king's crown, "the weight whereof was a talent of gold, was set on David's head, the spoil of the city in great abundance was brought forth," and after cruelly torturing the inhabitants, "David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem."[2]

Four centuries later we find that Rabbath-ammon had not only recovered from the effects of that conquest, but had again become the capital of the Ammonite nation. Some of the denunciations of the prophets against it have been fulfilled in a manner, and to an extent which strikes the traveller with astonishment. "Therefore the days come, saith the Lord, that Rabbah of the Ammonites shall be a desolate heap. Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley, saying, Who shall come up unto me? Behold ye shall be driven out every man right forth; and none shall gather up him that wandereth."[3] "And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the Ammonites a couch-

[1] 2 Sam. x. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7–14; xi. 1. [2] 2 Sam. xii. 26–31. [3] Jer. xlix. 2, 4, 5.

ing place for flocks: and ye shall know that I am the Lord."[1] Though we see few camels at 'Ammân, the interior of some of the buildings on the citadel-hill is still occupied by them, and the square tower above "the City of Waters" is so filthy from the flocks folded in it, that one can scarcely venture into it, and the surrounding region is at times covered with large droves of camels and numerous flocks of sheep and goats.

Many of those prophetic denunciations referred not merely to the capital city, but also to the entire people and land of Ammon. "Behold, therefore, I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen; and I will cut thee off from the people, and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries: I will destroy thee: and thou shalt know that I am the Lord."[2] "The Ammonites [shall] not be remembered amongst the nations; and Ammon shall be a perpetual desolation."[3] Those prophetic threatenings have been fulfilled to the very letter. Nothing but ruins are found here by the amazed explorer. Not even an inhabited village remains, and not a single Ammonite exists on the face of the earth.

About three centuries later Rabbath-ammon was rebuilt by Ptolemy II. of Egypt, and called, after him, Philadelphia, and it is mentioned under that name by Greek and Roman writers and Josephus. During the wars between the Syrian and Egyptian successors of Alexander the Great the possession of it was fiercely contended, and with varying success. Antiochus the Great besieged and captured it in the third century before Christ, and Herod the Great carried the citadel by assault, a few years before the commencement of our era. In the time of the Romans Philadelphia was one of the cities of the Decapolis; and after the establishment of Christianity it became the seat of a bishop, and thus continued until the Muhammedan conquest, in the seventh century. From that time this place is rarely mentioned, even by Arabian writers, until modern travellers began to visit it in the early part of the present century, and astonished the world with descriptions of its remarkable ruins.

[1] Ezek. xxv. 5. [2] Ezek xxv. 7.

[3] Ezek. xxv. 10; Zeph. ii. 9.

Sunday, September 28th. Evening.

The quiet rest of this Sabbath-day amidst the ruins at 'Ammân will be remembered as amongst the most agreeable, impressive, and instructive experiences in our pilgrimage through these Biblical and historical lands. Everything around us, animate and inanimate, suggests the ancient, and recalls the manners and customs of extinct tribes and nationalities. Men, women, and children, in costume, in features, in language, and in actions, seem to be a veritable reproduction of primitive and patriarchal times.

And the same is true of the animals, of the camels and the asses with their old-fashioned saddles, and the flocks and the herds with their shepherds and their dogs. Even the birds are Biblical, for the solemn stork, which, according to Jeremiah, "knoweth her appointed times" for migration, has already reached this point.[1] They congregate every evening in great numbers about these ruins, and the top of the minaret and of the high walls in that vicinity are covered with them.

I have spent three Sabbaths here. On my first visit there was not a single inhabitant, and the day was much quieter than the present one. Years after, on my second visit, there was only a poor, blind, and wretched old woman and her daughter hid away in one of the vaults of the great theatre. She kept the keys of the chambers under the seats, in which grain had been deposited for safe-keeping by the 'Adwân, and very few flocks came here to drink. This year there has been but little rain, the brooks and many of the fountains are already dry, and hence not only the Bedawîn and their camels and flocks, but even the storks and other birds are compelled to come here, and during the autumn this generally forsaken vale will be full of life, noise, and confusion.

An incident in our experience yesterday indicated most emphatically the entire absence of trees in this region. The charcoal which we brought with us had been exhausted, and after trying in vain, by offering a large bakhshîsh to the boys who gathered about the tents, to procure something combustible with which to prepare our dinner, the cook was obliged to purchase a plough from a fellâh and cut it up for firewood. Such misuse of an agricultural

[1] Jer. viii. 7.

implement, so necessary to the very existence of the farmer himself, never before occurred in all my travels in this country, nor have I ever heard of a similar expedient. The last fragments of that ill-fated plough will serve to boil the kettle for to-morrow morning's tea, and it appears that we must migrate or dispense altogether with cooking, for there is not another plough to be found.

To-morrow our ride will be a long one, through the wide open plains of the fertile Belka to 'Aiyûn Mûsa, the Fountains of Moses, in the valley below the summit of Jebel Neba, or Mount Nebo. Had we the time we might have made an excursion to the place where this pretty little stream disappears entirely, and then followed along the banks to where the waters re-appeared again. Burckhardt, when he was here in 1812, was informed that this stream disappeared and re-appeared three times between 'Ammân and Kŭl'at ez Zerka, and I have had the opportunity to confirm the correctness of that statement.

The last time I was here, in company with Dr. Merrill, we started down the valley on our way to Kŭl'at ez Zerka, about twelve miles distant. Soon after leaving these ruins we noticed that the volume of water in the stream was gradually diminishing, and in half an hour after that the bed of the stream was as dry as the road. About a mile farther on the water began to re-appear in the same gradual manner as it had disappeared. And that subsidence of the waters beneath the small stones in the bed of the stream and their subsequent re-appearance was repeated three times before we came to the great fountains of the Jabbok near Kŭl'at ez Zerka, which the Bedawîn call Râs ez Zerka, the head-waters of that river.

The rock strata must be of a very peculiar character to enable the water of so considerable a stream to sink away by insensible degrees until the bed of it was quite dry.

I have noticed similar phenomena occurring in small brooks, but I never before saw a large stream thus die away and rise again. For the last hour before we arrived at the fountains of the Zerka the stream was quite as large as at 'Ammân, and it was evident, from the marks along the banks, that during the winter this stream from 'Ammân does not all disappear below the surface.

XVII.

'AMMÂN TO 'AYÛN MÛSA.

Noisy Rooks.—Solemn Storks.—Ascent to the Plain south of 'Ammân.—No Roads and no Fences.—The Land of the Ammonites.—Jephthah's Victorious Campaign.—Aroer to Minnith.—Tyre supplied with Wheat from Minnith.—No Inhabited Place upon the Belka.—Abu Nugla.—Excursion to Mŭshatta.—The sterile Desert.—Luxuriant Wheat.—Camps of the Beni Sakhr.—Commotion in the Camp.—Uneasy Guides.—Rualla Bedawîn.—Blood Feud.—Haj Road to Mecca.—Route of the Egyptian Haj.—En Nŭkhl.—"The Wilderness of the Wanderings."—Khân Mŭshatta.—Massive Enclosing Wall defended by Twenty-five Towers.—Octagonal Towers.—The Façade.—Elegant Sculpture, unparalleled by that of any Age or Nation.—Twenty-two Animals and fifty-five Birds carved in Stone.—Entrance Gate-way.—The Middle Division of the Enclosure.—Chambers for the Guard and Garrison.—Court.—Triple Gate of the Palace.—Court.—Entrance Gate-way to the Audience-chamber.—The Audience-chamber.—Side Chambers.—Walls, Vaults, and Domes constructed of Brick.—Large Size and Extraordinary Number of the Bricks.—Bedawîn Tribal Marks.—Rude Arabic Characters.—Desolate and Lonely Site.—Material and Workmen transported from a Distance.—The wonderful Palace of Mŭshatta discovered by Canon Tristram.—Mr. James Fergusson.—Chosroes II.—Shahr Barz.—Dr. Merrill.—Mŭshatta, a Church and Convent.—Mŭshatta never finished.—Its Origin and Purpose unknown.—The Wintering Place.—But little Débris and less Destruction.—Dread of the Rualla Bedawîn.—The Haj Road and the Advance of the Hebrews along the Eastern Frontiers of Edom and Moab.—Entrance into the Territory of Sihon.—The Amorites and Moabites.—Reuben and Gad.—The Boundaries of Moab and of the Amorites.—A rolling Country.—Green Wheat-fields.—Quails and Gazelles.—The Jackal and the Fox.—Temple and Church at Mâdeba.—A large Reservoir.—Ziza.—Tanks and Cisterns.—Ruined Houses.—Remains of Temples and Public Buildings.—Roman Suburb at Mâdeba.—Colonnade.—Biblical History of Medeba.—"The Plain of Medeba."—Great Battle in the Time of David.—Thirty-two thousand Chariots.—Joab and Abishai defeat the Amorites and Syrians.—Medeba taken by Sihon.—Captured and re-captured by the Ammonites and Moabites.—Secular History of Medeba.—The Nabatheans.—Slaughter of a Wedding-party near Medeba.—John Maccabeus.—Hyrcanus I. besieged Medeba.—A History of Conquest, Bloodshed, and Sieges.—Medeba the Seat of a Bishop.—The Besom of Destruction.—Devastating Bedawîn.—Traces of old Roads.—Ancient Names of Persons and Places well known by the roaming Denizens of the Desert.—Monuments of Remote Antiquity.—The Dolmens.—Pillars of Witness and Votive Monuments.—Stone Circles, Menhirs, Disc-stones, and

rock-cut Tombs.—Menhirs alluded to in the Bible.—Disc-stones.—Agricultural Capability of the Belka.—The Region between Mâdeba and Abu Nugla.—The Beni Sakhr.—Thousands of Camels.—The numberless Camels of the Midianites.—Fifty thousand Camels taken from the Hagarites.—Golden Ear-rings of the Ishmaelites.—The Bedawîn Lineal Descendants of the Hagarites.—Ornaments and Garments similar to those of the Midianites.—The Wheat in the Valleys more luxuriant than on the Plain.—Cretaceous Limestone Ridges.—A double Supply of Rain-water.—Arabic Proverbs and Biblical Utterances.—A high Appreciation of Water.—Surprising Number of Cisterns excavated in the Cretaceous Rock.—The 'Adwân and the Broken Cisterns.—Extensive View over Ancient Moab.—Kerak.—Dibon.—The Moabite Stone.—King Mesha.—Two hundred thousand Lambs and Rams.—Baal-meon.—Ruins at Mâ'în described by Canon Tristram.—Beth-meon.—Biblical History of Beth-meon.—One of the High-places of Baal.—Balak and Balaam.—The Birthplace of Elisha.—Mâ'în a shapeless Mass of Ruins.—Threshing-floors.—Bedawîn taking Wheat out of a deep Cistern.—Grain concealed from hostile Tribes.—Entrance to a deep Pool of Water reluctantly disclosed.—No Wood to boil the Kettle.—The Zerka Mâ'în.—Excursion to Callirrhoe.—Bedawîn Encampment.—Camels and Flocks of Sheep and Goats.—Fresh Cheese.—"Houses of Hair."—A pretty Pastoral Scene.—A magnificent View of the Dead Sea.—Changeable Color of the Water.—A hopeless Wilderness.—Tremendous Gorge of the Zerka Mâ'în.—Lieutenant Conder's Description of the Gorge and the Hot Springs of Callirrhoe.—"The Black Grackle."—The Hot Sulphur Springs of Callirrhoe.—The Stream from the Zerka Mâ'în.—Pools full of Fish.—Tunnel through Tufaceous Sulphur.—A thermal Bath at 140° Fahrenheit.—The Mules found by Anah in the Wilderness.—Anah discovers Callirrhoe.—Visit of Herod the Great to Callirrhoe.—Baaras.—Fountains of Hot Water described by Josephus.—Medicinal, and good for Strengthening the Nerves.—"Mines of Sulphur and Alum."—John the Baptist beheaded in the Castle of Machærus.—Herod's Supper, and the Dancing of Herodias's Daughter.—"The Head of John the Baptist in a Charger."—War between Aretas and Herod.—"The Destruction of Herod's Army a Punishment from God."—Vain Attempt to reach the Shore of the Dead Sea from the Sulphur Springs of Callirrhoe.—The Ibex.—Stupendous Cliff of Columnar Basalt.—A gigantic Organ.—Kufeir Abu Bedd.—Disc-stones in Moab.—Mensef Abu Zeid.—Two large Wolves.—Shefa Neba, the Crest of Nebo.—Sahl Neba.—Jebel Neba, "the Mountain of Nebo."—Elevated Plateau of the Belka, and great Depression of the Shittim Plain.—Preservation of ancient Biblical Names.—The unchanged Name of Nebo.—View from Jebel Neba.—El Muslubîyeh.—The grassy Ravine between Jebel Neba and Jebel Siâghah.—Ruined Temple on Jebel Siâghah.—The City of Nebo.—View from the Ruins on Jebel Siâghah.—The Headland or Râs of Siâghah.—"The Mountain of Nebo, and the Top of Pisgah."—Here Moses must have stood.—The View of the Promised Land.—The Outlook from Râs Siâghah.—The Names Neba and Siâghah, and Nebo and Pisgah.—Siâghah an Arabic Form of the Hebrew Pisgah.—Descent to 'Ayûn Mûsa.—Approach of the Hebrews to the Land of Promise.—"The Mountains of Abarim."—Descent of the Israelites to "the Plains of Moab."—Balak and Balaam.—Balaam's Sublime Conceptions regarding the God of Israel.—Thrice seven Altars and twice as many Sacrifices.—Jebel Neba the first Station.—Balaam's Parable.—"The Field of

Zophim."—The Grassy Vale between Jebel Neba and Jebel Siâghah.—The Parable of Balaam.—"The Top of Peor."—The Summit of Siâghah.—Balaam's Parable.—Wrath of Balak, and Flight of Balaam.—What "the Son of Beor saw and said."—Balaam an Unprincipled Man.—Slain in Battle fighting against Israel.—Obstinate and Puzzling Questions.

September 29th.

LEAVING 'Ammân at this early hour, there is nothing stirring among these solitary ruins except that colony of noisy rooks in the crannies of the cliff that overhangs the river opposite the Basilica.

They are always there, and loudly express their alarm and resentment of all passing intruders. In the spring the high walls of the ruins in that neighborhood are the favorite roosting-place of the storks. It is then one of the diversions of the place to watch those large and long-legged birds flocking thither at evening from the surrounding region, and to witness the quarrelling amongst themselves for the most comfortable spot upon which to roost. They rarely nest in this part of the country, but migrate for that purpose to the extreme north of Syria and to Asia Minor; still many of them prolong their stay here until the end of the summer, and are seen in small companies roaming through the fields and over the plains, seeking in silent and solemn gravity for their proper food.

What may that be?

Earthworms, grubs, grasshoppers, insects, snails, mice, and frogs. Storks are by no means fastidious as to their diet, and they even kill lizards and small snakes, and devour them greedily.

Having after this long ascent reached the general level of the country south of 'Ammân, we must turn to the south-west, and direct our course towards Jebel Neba. For most of the day we shall follow no road, nor do we need any. The great plain of the Belka stretches away westward and southward farther than the range of vision; nor is there wall, hedge, or enclosure of any kind to interfere with the perfect freedom of our travel. Although this fertile plateau must have been thickly inhabited by the Ammonites, in the days of their prosperity, they have left but few indications of their presence, and there is not even a tree within sight to attract attention or relieve the oppressive solitude.

Very different must this land of the Ammonites have been when Jephthah made his victorious campaign against the king of

Ammon, more than eleven centuries before the Christian era. He conquered twenty cities in this very limited territory from Aroer, supposed to be the ruin called 'Aireh, north-west of 'Ammân, to Minnith, possibly Minyeh, east of Hesbân.[1] Minnith appears to have supplied Tyre with a superior kind of wheat in the time of Ezekiel, and it is fair to conclude that it was somewhere on this wheat-growing plain of the Belka; and it may have given its name to all the wheat that was taken to Tyre from this region.[2]

That supposition is sufficiently probable to impart additional interest to this broad, apparently boundless, and treeless plain, over which we seem to be wandering at will.

The objective point of this day's ride is Jebel Neba, Mount Nebo, which rises to a moderate elevation on the south-western border of the Belka. We shall, therefore, cross this great plain diagonally from north-east to south-west, and along that line there is not an important ruin nor a single inhabited place, and we have entire liberty to select any course that best suits our purpose. By inclining to the south of the direct line from this to Nebo, we shall pass Khirbet Abu Nugla, or Abu Nŭkla, el 'Âl, and Hesbân, on the right, and near enough to Mâdeba and Mâ'în, on the left, to obtain a view of them and of the land of Moab beyond the Zerka Mâ'în, southward to the river Arnon. Several years ago our party spent a night at Abu Nugla, to which deserted place we had come from Mâdeba in order to find water and to shorten the ride to Mŭshatta, about five hours to the south of 'Ammân.

Abu Nugla is not a ruined village, nor is there a single house in sight; and only a number of rock-cut cisterns are found there, from one of which we obtained an abundant supply of cool, sweet water. We had for our guides Fahd and 'Ali, and three other sheikhs of the 'Adwân. As none of them had ever been to Mŭshatta, they could not tell how long it would take to get there, nor how many hours' ride it would be from there to 'Ammân, where we intended to spend the next night. In that uncertainty we took an early breakfast, and leaving the muleteers and servants with one of the 'Adwân sheikhs to make their way to 'Ammân direct, we set off southward to re-discover the now famous palace at Mŭshatta.

[1] Judges xi. 33.

[2] Ezek. xxvii. 17.

We had a striking illustration of the manner in which the fertile land fades away into the sterile desert. For the first half hour we passed through luxuriant wheat, there being no road, and then ascended a low rocky ridge, from which the plain rolled away eastward and southward to the horizon. For the next hour the soil was capable of cultivation, and much of the land must occasionally be sown with wheat. That part of the plain of el Belka was dotted over with the camps of the Beni Sakhr, and the smoke from their early fires rose only a few feet above the tents, and spreading widely over them, had all the appearance of a silvery cloud gleaming in the morning sunlight; but a gentle breeze from the south soon dissipated that bright and beautiful illusion.

Our guides were not quite at ease after we left their own territory and entered upon that of the Beni Sakhr. As we passed by one of the large encampments of that tribe there appeared to be a hurried gathering of Bedawîn engaged in an angry discussion. Men on foot and on horseback were coming from all sides, and there was a general commotion in the camp. One of our sheikhs cantered off to meet a horseman with a long spear as he passed speeding towards the noisy assembly, and he reported that the dispute was about some family quarrel amongst the Beni Sakhr themselves, and with which we had no concern.

After passing beyond the range of the Beni Sakhr the guides suddenly called a halt, and taking our glasses made an anxious survey of the region to the south-east. We had reached the debatable frontier between the Beni Sakhr and the Rualla Bedawîn, a large tribe occupying the desert farther east, and who for the time being were "at war" with both the 'Adwân and the Beni Sakhr. Our sheikhs finally decided that what they supposed to be an encampment of their enemies was merely a clump of bushes on the hill-side, and we resumed our ride in that direction. I asked Sheikh Fahd what would have occurred to us all in case there had really been some of those formidable Rualla in sight.

"We should have had to depend upon the speed of our horses," said he, "and fled back to the camp of the Beni Sakhr, for the Rualla are very powerful. That tribe are more than a match for the 'Adwân and the Beni Sakhr combined, and while the existing

blood feud remains unsettled neither we ourselves nor any traveller could pass east of the Haj road without great risk."

The peculiar parallel and well-worn tracks, which we soon after crossed, were made by the caravan of the Haj on its way to Mecca. There are more than twenty of such trails, running close together, as far as the eye can reach in either direction. I have seen the same thing on the route of the Egyptian Haj, which I crossed on my way from Sinai, near the castle of en Nŭkhl, in the middle of "the Wilderness of the Wanderings." When there is nothing to prevent the caravan from spreading out, the camels select different paths and thus advance with a broad and imposing front. Of course they must all follow in single file when passing through narrow ravines, and then their progress is much retarded.

Sheikh 'Ali, who had cantered up to the top of the hill ahead of us, motioned that the place we had come to see was farther to the south, and we therefore changed our course accordingly. Soon after rising the hill we reached Mŭshatta, after a pleasant ride of about four hours from Abu Nugla. The so-called palace stands upon the open desert, and entirely alone in that arid and treeless wilderness. As we approached it from the north and on a higher level, it had the appearance of a ruined caravansary of great size; and in fact it is called Khân Mŭshatta by the Bedawîn. Such is the first impression, nor is it modified until one passes around the external wall to the main entrance on the south side.

Mŭshatta is an extraordinary and unique structure, unlike any other ruin with which to compare it in this country. It consists of an open square area, surrounded by a massive wall, about five hundred feet in length on all its four sides, and from fifteen to twenty feet high, and the space thus enclosed was divided longitudinally, from south to north, into three parts, the central being the largest. The wall is built of well-cut but not very large blocks of limestone, and was defended by twenty-five towers. Those at the four corners or angles are circular, the flanking towers on either side of the entrance are octagonal, and those along the side walls are semicircular. The façade extends for about one hundred and eighty feet between the first semicircular towers on the right and left of the main entrance, and of course includes the two octagonal

flanking towers. The latter are entirely covered with most intricate, elaborate, and admirably executed sculpture, which is continued over the face of the wall beyond each of them for about seventy feet to the east and west.



KHÂN MŬSHATTA—THE WINTERING-PLACE.

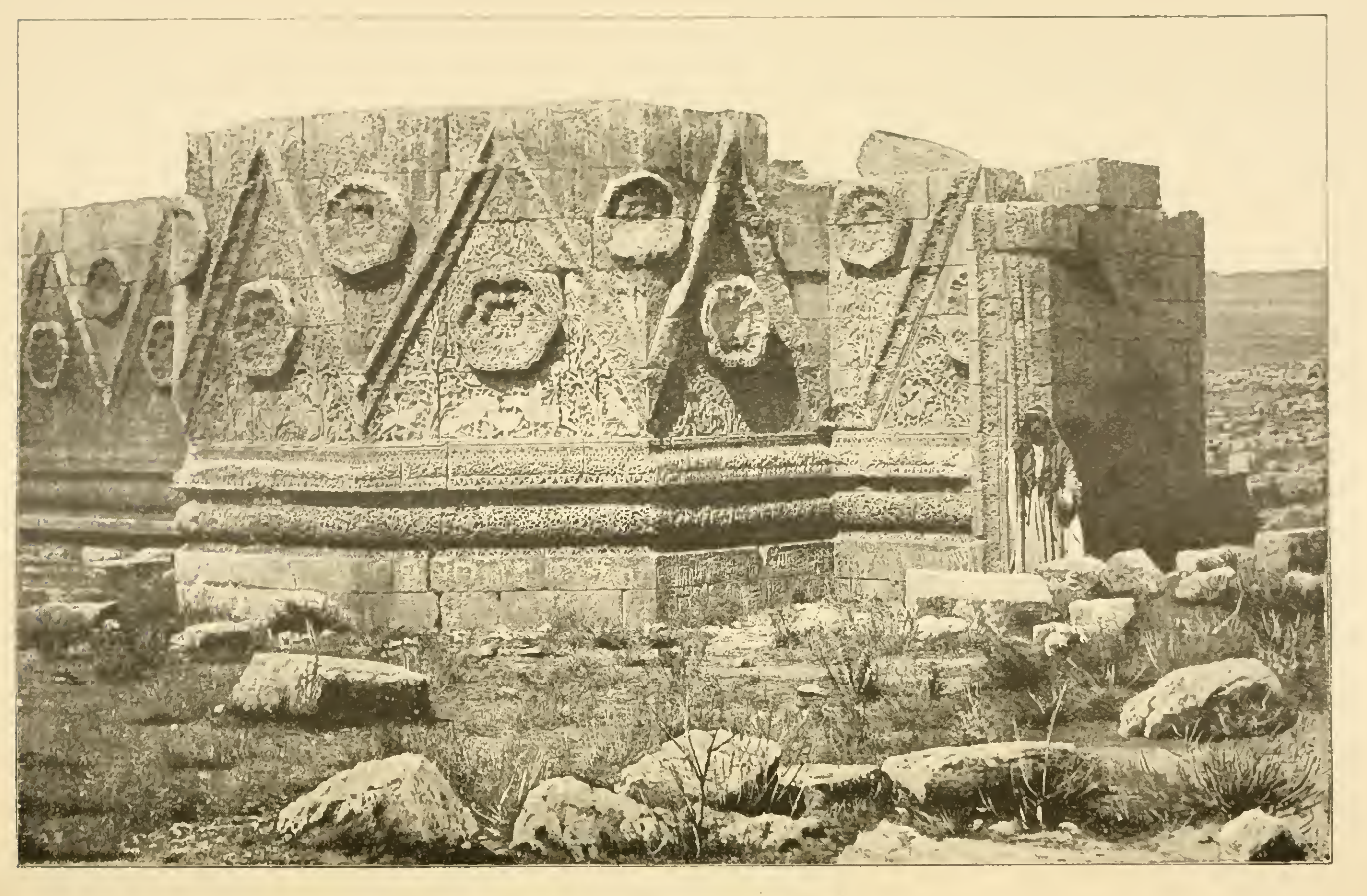
It can be truly said of the façade that it is "adorned with a richness and magnificence unparalleled, and scarcely exceeded in the architecture of any age or nation." The wall of the façade, in its present condition, is about twenty feet high, and along the face of it ran an elegant zigzag moulding, at least ten feet high, in bold relief, with large bosses in the centre of the triangular segments, or sections, above and below the moulding. Within and about those sections every available space has been covered with fretwork of great beauty and variety of design — vines, fruit, birds, animals, and even men. In the midst of that graceful stone tracery of blending foliage and fruit birds are seen in the act of pecking at the fruit, and there are a variety of animals, some of which are represented as drinking from stone vases.

On that part of the façade west of the gate-way are lions, pan-

thers, lynx, several with wings, buffaloes, gazelles, and some other animals. Among those, but mostly above them, are many kinds of birds, such as peacocks, pigeons, partridges, and smaller birds—twenty-two animals and fifty-five birds in all. There are also figures of men on the side of the tower west of the entrance, and one on the wall beyond it, but they are somewhat defaced. The ornamental work of the gate-way is of the same character as that on the zigzag moulding; but it is not so elaborate as that on the octagonal towers, or upon the façade on either side of them. There are no birds and but two animals on the wall east of the entrance, but a space as large as that on the west side, and corresponding to it, is covered with blended vines, fruits, and flowers in endless variety, and beautifully carved.

It is very evident that the façade, and indeed the entire structure, at Mŭshatta was not only never finished, but it can be said that it was not even fairly commenced. The gate-way on the south seems to have been the only entrance, and within the enclosure the middle division, two hundred feet wide and five hundred feet long, was apparently the only one intended for occupation. It was divided into three sections, the central being the largest, and that around and beyond the entrance was the smallest. In that section there were sixteen chambers, probably intended for the accommodation of the guard and garrison; but nothing seems to have been added to the foundations, which are just level with the surface. The middle section was an open court, nearly two hundred feet square, but without any rooms or chambers, and no traces of foundations. The third and last section is somewhat smaller, and was entirely occupied by the so-called palace itself.

The entrance to the palace was from the south, through a wide and lofty central gate-way, with two smaller side entrances. The fallen arches of that triple gate lie prostrate in regular order in front of the entrance, apparently overthrown by an earthquake shock. The massive square buttresses and pillars from which those arches sprung, and upon which they rested, are still standing, and the carving on their capitals resembles that upon the outside of the main gate-way between the flanking towers. Beyond the triple gate is a large open court, about sixty feet wide and seventy-five feet long,



OCTAGONAL TOWER AT MUSHATTA.



with several vaulted chambers on either side, communicating with interior passages, courts, and various other chambers.

At the end of the open court was another wide gate with massive square pilasters, whose capitals are more elaborately ornamented than those of the triple gate-way. That entrance led into what was probably the grand audience-chamber of the palace. It had large semicircular recesses, or alcoves, on the sides and at the farther end opposite the entrance, and, including them, it was about fifty feet square. The audience-chamber appears to have had a domed or arched roof, with side vaults over the three alcoves. To the right and left of the entrance are doors leading to courts and passages communicating with lofty vaulted chambers, which extend on either side of the audience-chamber, and beyond it to the north wall of the main enclosure; and behind the audience-chamber are similar vaulted chambers, which are entered by arched door-ways on the right and left of the rear alcove.

With the exception of the triple gate-way and the entrance to the audience-chamber, the walls, vaults, and domes of the so-called palace at Mŭshatta were constructed of brick or tiles. The walls were of great thickness, and about twenty-five feet high, and the bricks of which they were built rested upon a foundation of three courses of well-cut stones. Many of the bricks are about a foot square and three inches thick. They were well burnt and laid in mortar, and the amount of them is truly surprising. The palace, also, was never finished, and the stones are covered with the tribal marks of the Bedawîn. Hundreds of such signs and brief sentences in rude Arabic characters are seen all over the walls of the chambers, and also on those of the main enclosure. Such marks and scrawls are of no special historic importance, and there is apparently nothing about the twenty-five or more chambers of the palace to indicate that they were intended for the dwelling apartments, or even the hunting-lodge of a royal prince.

The site certainly has nothing to recommend it for a palatial residence. Situated on the open plain, with higher ground about it, surrounded by a flat, arid desert, entirely destitute of water, with no human habitation in sight for many a weary mile, far from any highway — what could have been the motive that led to its

construction? and from whence came the building material? The compact limestone is different from the rock of the surrounding region; and the brick, of which there is such an extraordinary amount, must have been moulded and burnt far away from that neighborhood. In fact, the entire material and all the workmen must have been transported thither from a great distance; and to what end, for what purpose, and by whom?

Canon Tristram, to whom we are indebted for the discovery and detailed description of the wonderful "palace at Mŭshatta," accepts the opinion of Mr. James Fergusson, "referring it to the Sassanian dynasty of Persian kings, and to the history of Chosroes II., and fixing the date to be A.D. 614."[1] Dr. Merrill finds "that Chosroes was never in Palestine," and is "almost certain that Chosroes did not build the Mŭshatta palace." "It is, moreover, very doubtful," he says, "if it was built by Shahr Barz," the general of Chosroes.[2] And he adds: "During the latter part of this period [extending from the second to the fifth centuries of the Christian era], when the Byzantine artists were the finest in the world, when Christianity was tending towards monasticism, and when, for the East Jordan country at least, wealth abounded, it is not unreasonable to suppose that one of the Christian emperors built at Mŭshatta a church and convent on a magnificent scale."[3]

We examined the ruins at Mŭshatta together, and I find, on looking over my notes, taken on the spot, that such an idea—of a large convent and church—was constantly suggested by the peculiarities of that vast structure; and the arrangement of the courts, passages, chambers, alcoves, etc., accords with such a theory as that of Dr. Merrill. Whatever may have been the object in its construction, however, it was never realized. The architects and builders dropped the work half finished, and fled, leaving unsolved "the origin of one of the most interesting ruins to be found in any part of the world." But we can also, like Dr. Merrill, feel "quite confident that more detailed measurements and observations, accompanied by excavations, will throw light upon a question which it would be most gratifying to have solved."[4]

[1] Land of Moab, p. 208.
[2] East of the Jordan, p. 260.
[3] East of the Jordan, pp. 262, 263.
[4] East of the Jordan, p. 263.

Mŭshatta is merely the Arabic name for a place which may be occupied in the winter, but those ruins can now only afford a miserable shelter to the Bedawîn, with their flocks and herds, during the rainy season. There is, therefore, but little rubbish in or about the place, and the intricate and elegant carving has suffered less from vandal hands than that in any other ruin in the country. The walls have not been pulled down and the stones carried away to adjacent villages, for there are none in that region, and therefore even the bricks, which might be easily transported, remain undisturbed.

Our Bedawîn sheikhs were in such dread of the Rualla that they urged us to depart from that neighborhood. Indeed some of them mounted their horses and started, and we were obliged to follow them, although we would have liked to spend days instead of hours studying the details of that extraordinary structure. After leaving Mŭshatta for 'Ammân, we followed the Haj road northward for several miles. Those many compact and parallel paths testify to the earnest and persistent enthusiasm of the Muhammedan world. Age after age, for a thousand years and more, those pilgrim caravans have trod their weary way along that dreary road and toiled through the burning desert to Mecca and the venerated Caaba in far-distant Arabia. That strange caravan route has always been invested, in my mind, with peculiar interest. It indicates, south of Mŭshatta, I suppose, the general course which the Hebrews followed on their journey to this region from Ezion-gaber, when they "turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab."[1]

Refused permission to pass through the land of Edom, they must have inclined eastward for many miles to get beyond the territory of the Edomites, before they could turn northward, and that would bring them near the present Haj road to Mecca, which, no doubt, follows the most practicable route along the eastern frontier of Edom and Moab. When, therefore, the Hebrews had reached a point in their journey northward, somewhere in the wilderness south-west of Mŭshatta, they probably turned westward, and entered the fertile region between the territory of Moab and that of "Sihon, the Amorite king of Heshbon." The Amorites had conquered much of the original possessions of the Moabites, as we learn

[1] Deut. ii. 8.

from the twenty-second chapter of Numbers and elsewhere. At the command of the Lord, Moses did not hesitate to attack them, and having defeated "Sihon and all his people," he took their cities. Nor were they restored to the Moabites, but the whole territory of the Amorites was allotted to the tribes of Reuben and Gad.

We must now be traversing that very region, but I suppose it is nearly impossible to ascertain the boundaries of those tribes.

The river Arnon appears to have been the natural boundary between them on the south, but their possessions seem to have been singularly intermixed, and places may have frequently changed owners, sometimes being subject to the Moabites and at others to the Amorites, and subsequently to the Hebrews.

After four hours of steady riding southward from 'Ammân, we must be in the territory of Reuben, for Elealeh and Mebeba, which belonged to that tribe, are a few miles to the west and south-west of us. We shall pass by the former to-morrow, but it would now lead us too far out of our way to visit the latter. We will therefore ride to the top of that hill a short distance ahead of us on the left, from which we can get a distant view of it.

From our present stand-point Mâbeba, situated on its tell, and extending down on to the plain, presents quite an imposing appearance, and it must have been an important city.

We came to it from Mâ'în in an hour and a half, our Bedawîn sheikhs leading us over a beautiful rolling country and through green wheat-fields in the broad vales that lay between the two places. Quails started up from under the feet of our horses, flew for a few rods, and then dropped down into the wheat as if they had been shot. The 'Adwân guides and some of our party gave chase to fleet gazelles, but failed to overtake them; and a guilty-looking jackal and a terrified fox had to run for their lives. We went first to examine a ruin upon the hill west of the city. You can distinctly see the two columns which still remain standing before the western entrance to that edifice. They are about twenty feet high, and the shafts swell out in the middle; the capitals, one Corinthian, the other Ionic, and the entablature, merely a large block of rough stone, have evidently been placed there at a later period. The edifice to which the columns belonged may have been

a large temple, which was afterwards transformed into a church. The exterior walls have all disappeared, but the foundations of the apse at the east end can be clearly traced.

Between the hill on which that church stood and the city in the shallow vale is a large reservoir or tank. It is about three hundred and thirty feet long from east to west, and three hundred and twelve feet broad from north to south, measuring from the inside. It is over fifteen feet deep from the top of the wall to the soil which now covers the bottom, and which is often planted with tobacco. At the south-east and north-east corners stone steps led down to the water, and on the latter corner was a strongly built tower, probably for the defence of the reservoir. The wall is in excellent preservation, and is about twenty feet high and twelve feet thick; but on the east side at the base it is over eighteen feet wide, diminishing to twelve feet at the top, and further strengthened by a massive embankment, as it was exposed on that side to the heaviest pressure from the great body of water within the reservoir.

A strong dam was carried across the shallow valley southward to lead the water into the tank during the rainy season. It has long since been washed away, and the reservoir is now always empty. It would require but little expense to put that large reservoir into complete repair, and thus secure an abundant supply of water, not only for all necessary domestic purposes but also to irrigate the fertile fields below it to the south-east. That tank is larger and much more substantially built than the one at Zîza, a place to the south-east of Mâdeba, which we saw to the south of our route to Mûshatta. There are several tanks and numerous cisterns in the town itself, some of which, still containing water, were roofed over and were about thirty feet deep.

The houses of the inhabitants appear to have covered the entire mound-like hill upon which the city was built, nor were there many open spaces or public buildings within the walls of the town. The existing remains, of apparently Roman origin, are chiefly on the north-east of the tell and outside of the city proper. There are to be seen the ruins of a few small temples and several important buildings, as the amount and character of the prostrate remains abundantly testify. The eastern gate of that Roman suburb was

constructed of large well-squared blocks, and a colonnade ran westward from it to the main group of temples and other edifices. Many of the bases of the columns are still in their original position, and the ruins in that quarter are evidently of a later period than those of the old town. Amongst the ruins are great vaults of very deep cisterns, some of which still hold water in the rainy season. Long lines of large, well-cut stones extend in various directions, and seem to enclose nothing, and the edifices to which they belonged may never have been completed.

Mâdeba furnishes one of the most striking examples of the tenacity with which the ancient names have adhered to their original sites. The name has remained identically the same since the age of Moses, a period of about three thousand five hundred years, and the first mention of it, in Numbers xxi. 30, implies that it was a well-known place long before the time of the Hebrew Law-giver. According to Joshua, xiii. 9 and 16, the city was assigned to Reuben, and mention is also made of "the plain of Medeba." Standing on the top of its ruin-covered tell one can realize the appropriateness of that topographical designation. Mâdeba is surrounded by a plain, varied indeed by long wave-like swells which roll away to the horizon, but still a plain of considerable extent. Upon that plain in the time of David the great battle was fought between the Ammonites, with their Syrian confederates, and "all the host" of Israel, commanded by Joab and his brother Abishai. The Syrians, with their "thirty and two thousand chariots," were defeated, and fled from before Joab, and the Ammonites were chased into the city by Abishai; but Medeba itself was not captured, and the inference is that it remained in the hands of the Ammonites.[1]

Medeba originally belonged to the Moabites, but it was taken from them by Sihon, king of the Amorites.[2] He was defeated by the Hebrews on their approach from "the Wilderness of the Wandering," and all his land was confiscated; but it is not certain that Medeba was ever actually occupied by the Israelites. The Ammonites held it during the reign of David, and the Moabites apparently regained possession of it in the time of Isaiah.[3] After that Medeba is not mentioned again in the Bible. In the second cent-

[1] 1 Chron. xix. 1–15. [2] Numb. xxi. 30. [3] Isa. xv. 2.

ury before the Christian era Medeba belonged to the Nabatheans; and we read of a grand wedding-party issuing from the city, with the bride and a great train, as befitted "the daughter of one of the great princes of Chanaan." But the bride and groom and all their friends, "with drums, and music, and many weapons," were set upon by Jonathan and Simon Maccabeus, and a great slaughter was made of them, and all their spoils were taken, in revenge for the blood of John, their brother, whom the Nabatheans had captured and carried off, with all that he had, to Medeba.[1] Josephus informs us that Hyrcanus I. took Medeba after a siege of six months, "and that not without the greatest distress of his army."[2]

Thus the history of Medeba, from the earliest times before Moses and the Hebrew conquest down to the Roman period and the beginning of the Christian era, has been distinguished by conquests, battles, revolutions, bloody massacres, and long sieges; and it has had its full share in the misfortunes of this region east of the Dead Sea. During the early centuries of our era it was a place of some importance and the seat of a bishop, whose name appears in the records of some of the Eastern Councils. Since then the Muhammedan conquerors with their besom of destruction have swept over it, and now the devastating tribes of Bedawîn spread their tents upon its great plain and about its crumbling ruins.

Although ancient roads lead in various directions from Mâdeba, some of which—probably Roman—can still be traced by parallel lines of curb-stones, yet the Bedawîn follow none of them, but strike across the plain and through the green wheat-fields in the direction they wish to take, without any paths whatever. And it is quite startling to hear from those ignorant denizens of the desert the identical names of persons, such as Sihon, and of places, like Medeba, which they bore, and by which they were known in this region, three thousand five hundred years ago, and which have been perpetuated unchanged down to the present day.

The ruins of the temples and other public edifices at Mâdeba are comparatively modern. Are there no ancient remains in this region of a Moabite or Hebrew origin?

The most remarkable monuments of remote antiquity found in

[1] 1 Macc. ix. 36–42. [2] Ant. xiii. 9, 1. B. J. 1, 2, 6.

many parts of this country, especially in Moab, Gilead, and the region east of the Jordan as far north as the sources of that river under Hermon, are the dolmens; and they have been seen and described by nearly all travellers through that part of Syria. The most common form of the dolmen consists of two rough, unhewn blocks of rock laid parallel, or at an obtuse angle to each other, with a third flat, table-like rock placed upon them. The side blocks vary in length and height from one to six feet, and the flat rock above them from three feet in length, with proportionate breadth and thickness, to thirteen feet by eleven feet, and two feet thick. No ornamentation or inscriptions have been discovered upon the dolmens, and they are rarely found on the top of mounds or hills; but they stand mostly on the hard surface of the native rock, upon the sloping sides of mountains and hills, in great valleys, and, occasionally, in low places and concealed spots.

When, by whom, and for what purpose those dolmens were erected, and in such numbers—for there are hundreds of them—are questions to which no very satisfactory answers have yet been given. That they are extremely ancient all admit; but they were probably not tombs, for there is no evidence that they were ever used as sepulchres. It has been conjectured that they were connected with religious rites as altars and for sacrificial purposes; but there is no indication of fire about them, and if they were ever sprinkled with the blood of victims, or smeared with oil, all traces of such offerings have long since disappeared. There is no probability that they were made by the Ammonites or Moabites, the descendants of Lot, and they certainly were not erected by the Hebrews. The natural inference seems to be that they were the pillars of witness and votive monuments of a pre-historic race or people who dwelt in this land anterior to the time of the Hebrew patriarchs, and set up to confirm a solemn covenant, commemorate an important event, or to acknowledge and propitiate some unknown god.

Besides dolmens there are other ancient monuments in Moab—rude stone circles, cairns, menhirs, disc-stones, and rock-cut tombs with loculi and well-preserved sarcophagi; but all these are comparatively modern when compared with the dolmens. The standing stones, called menhirs, from three to ten feet high, more or less

squared and otherwise manipulated, are isolated pillars, and are supposed to have been objects of superstitious customs and religious reverence among the people in ancient times. They are alluded to in the Bible, more or less distinctly, and that imparts additional interest to them. The discs resemble large millstones set up on end, and are about ten feet in diameter and from two to four feet thick, and some of them have a round or square hole in the centre of the disc. They indicate a great advance in mechanical skill above the constructors of dolmens, who appear to have had no kind of tool whatever, and must have handled those great blocks of stone with extreme difficulty.

No one can obtain an adequate conception of this plain of Moab, the modern Belka, and of its agricultural capabilities, without traversing it in various directions—east, west, north, and south.

Our ride to-day across it diagonally has furnished a constant confirmation of that statement. Hour after hour we have travelled through it, until its boundless expanse and its treeless and featureless uniformity have become positively fatiguing, and its general fertility exceedingly wearisome.

The region between Mâdeba and Abu Nugla is of the same character. The distance is about twelve miles, and the direction nearly north. We followed our 'Adwân sheikhs through the wheat-fields and over the rolling plain, making our own pathway as we proceeded, and we soon found ourselves in the midst of scenes quite new and surprising. Far as the eye could reach, the plain was covered with droves of camels belonging to the Beni Sakhr Bedawîn, whose proper range is south of the Zerka Mâ'în, but who were then at peace with the 'Adwân, and could roam over that part of their territory with their flocks and camels. Those of the Beni Sakhr whom we saw with the camels were morose and taciturn, and they did not even return our salutations. I was glad, however, to pass through the midst of such scenes, which transport one back to patriarchal times more distinctly and impressively than anything else in this country. I tried to count the camels, but after reaching a thousand I gave it up; there were certainly over five thousand of them in sight, both old and young.

We need not wonder that the terrified Hebrews, in the time of

Gideon, said that the camels of the Midianites and the Amalekites "were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude;"[1] nor does the statement in 1 Chron. v. 20, 21 seem incredible, that the united tribes east of the Jordan, when they made war with the Hagarites, and "cried to God in the battle and were helped, took away of their camels fifty thousand." The Hagarites were nomads, and roamed over this eastern country, and they were more numerous and certainly more wealthy than the present Bedawîn.

The ear-rings of the Ishmaelites whom Gideon "subdued" amounted, in weight, to "a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold; besides ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that was on the kings, and besides the chains that were about their camels' necks."[2] But though poorer than the Hagarites of old, the modern Bedawîn may be their lineal descendants, and there is quite enough of resemblance between them to throw much light upon the narratives in the ancient Scriptures. And if we could frequent the tents of the Wulid 'Aly, and those of the powerful tribes of the 'Anazeh, we would no doubt find ornaments and garments similar to those worn by the Midianites in the time of Gideon.

I noticed, as we rode along, that the wheat growing in the valleys was generally much more luxuriant than that on the open plain—a circumstance easily explained, and one which this region through which we are now passing affords a constant succession of illustrative examples. About one-third of the land is composed of long low ridges of cretaceous limestone, having shallow fertile vales between. The rich soil has been washed down from the tops and sides of those ridges, leaving an upper crust of rock sufficiently hard to shed off the rain, and the double supply of water thus obtained gives to the wheat in the vales below its exceptionally luxuriant growth. That fact originated a very significant Arab proverb. They say of a person remarkably fortunate, "His land drinks its own waters and those of others also." Such expressions could only be used by a people living in a similar region, and to whom water was a prime necessity. To that extent they corroborate and illustrate many Biblical utterances and poetic allusions which imply an equally high appreciation of water.

[1] Judges vii. 12. [2] Judges viii. 26.

As those rocky ridges, culminating in mounds or tells, are the general and characteristic feature of Moab, and as we now find the ruins of ancient cities upon them, that topic will bear an additional remark or two. Below the upper hard crust of the rock there is generally a soft cretaceous formation, in which cisterns are excavated with very little labor or expense; hence their surprising number. Not only is every tell upon which ruins are found honeycombed with them, but such cisterns are excavated in the hill-sides, in the valleys, and on the plains, far from the site of any city.

It is a significant fact that not one of all the hundreds of those cisterns was made by the present dwellers in the land. The 'Adwân have neither mechanical skill nor energy enough to keep even the existing ones in repair; and our guide, Sheikh Fahd, admits that many cisterns that held water twenty years ago are now broken. After the rainy season a very large part of this region is abandoned by the Bedawîn, owing principally to the lack of water, and in time the whole of this plain of Moab will be forsaken by them.

We have now reached a part of the plain, on our way to Nebo, which commands an extensive view southward over a large portion of ancient Moab. Beyond the profound gorge of the Zerka Mâ'în the ruins of Dibon, at Dhîbân, are plainly made out; and far away southward is the elevated plateau where Sihon reigned when the Hebrews came and overthrew his kingdom. The view extends towards Kerak, though that city itself cannot be seen. That entire region was once densely inhabited, and the sites of many Biblical and historical towns have been identified and described by modern explorers. Dibon has been recently brought into prominence by the discovery there of the now famous Moabite stone with its long inscription concerning King Mesha, the "sheep-master," mentioned in 2 Kings iii. 4 as having "rendered unto the king of Israel" two hundred thousand lambs and rams, with the wool. On this side of the Zerka Mâ'în the ruins at Mâ'în are plainly visible, the supposed site of Baal-meon, one of the towns which "the children of Reuben built" before they passed over into the land of Canaan.

I was at Mâ'în with Dr. Merrill, and we made an excursion from there to the hot springs of Callirrhoe. Mâ'în occupies the sides and summits of three or four low hills above and east of the wide

and shallow vale which declines towards the Zerka Mâ'în. Though covering a larger space than Mâdeba, the remains of the ancient city are not so well preserved, presenting only the appearance of a mass of shapeless ruins. "The remains are of the ordinary type," says Canon Tristram — "foundations, fragments of walls, lines of streets, old arches, many carved stones, caves, wells, and cisterns innumerable. Some curious cavernous dwellings, built up with arches and fragments of old columns, are still occasionally used by the Arabs as folds and sleeping-places."[1]

The Reubenites took it from the Moabites, rebuilt or fortified it, and probably changed its name to Beth-meon.[2] It subsequently reverted to the Moabites; and Jeremiah, in his denunciation of Moab, includes it "among the cities of the land of Moab upon which judgment is come."[3] Its destruction, along with the other cities of Moab, "the glory of the country," was foretold by Ezekiel nearly nine hundred years after the Hebrews took possession of it in the time of Moses.[4] It has been supposed that "the high places of Baal," to which Balak brought Balaam "that he might see the utmost part of the people" of Israel and curse them from thence, was at Mâ'în or in its immediate neighborhood. But if the Hebrews were then encamped on "the plains of Moab," over against Jericho, Balaam must have travelled about ten or twelve miles farther towards the north-west before he could see them at all. Mâ'în is mentioned by Eusebius as the birthplace of Elisha, and as being a large village in Moab called Balmano in his day. Under the blighting influence of Islâm it has sunk into a shapeless mass of ruins, without one solitary inhabitant remaining.

We encamped in the shallow vale near the west side of the city. In the threshing season that place must present a very lively scene, for the whole area was marked off into threshing-floors. A little farther away some Bedawîn were filling their sacks with wheat from a deep cistern which they had uncovered. The owners often conceal their grain in such wells, and if a raid is made upon them by a hostile tribe those hidden treasures remain undiscovered. There are many cisterns among and around the ruins, but it was

[1] Land of Moab, p. 304.
[2] Numb. xxxii. 38.
[3] Jer. xlviii. 20–24.
[4] Ezek. xxv. 9.

some hours before any one could be induced to show the entrance to a deep underground pool, and the quality of the water was not of the best. Neither was there wood enough in the vicinity to make the kettle boil, so our men were scattered abroad towards night, like Israel in Egypt, gathering stubble. During the afternoon I looked down into the tremendous gorge of the Zerka Mâ'în, which is some distance south of Mâ'în. That is one of the two principal rivers of Moab, and it finds its way westward through impenetrable gorges, frightful chasms, and the wildest of wild ravines down to the hot sulphur springs of Callirrhoe, and thence between perpendicular and impassable cliffs to the Dead Sea.

We devoted an entire day to an excursion to Callirrhoe and back to our camp at Mâ'în. Understanding that we had a long and fatiguing ride to accomplish, we left our tents at early dawn, and started with our 'Adwân sheikhs for a large Arab encampment, which we reached in half an hour. Sheikh Fahd engaged the chief of the tribe to accompany us, and his local knowledge was of special value during the day. The camp of Sheikh 'Eed was pitched around the head of a shallow vale, forming an oblong enclosure, within which the camels and flocks of sheep and goats were folded during the night. The camp presented a lively appearance in the early morning—women and children all busy milking the flocks and leading them forth to their dewy pasture upon the surrounding hill-sides. We noticed many small cakes of fresh-made cheese placed on the tops of their sable tents—or "houses of hair," as the Bedawîn call them—to dry, out of the reach of their hungry dogs.

It was a pretty pastoral scene, and the region was quite picturesque—the ridges covered with small trees and bushes, the intervening valleys clothed with green wheat, and here and there, in some shallow ravine, were the black tents of a Bedawîn encampment. Farther on the surface of the country was broken by deep ravines which descended southward to the valley of the Zerka Mâ'în, and on the north stretched the high and wooded range of el Muslubîyeh above the profound depths of the Dead Sea.

In about an hour from the camp of Sheikh 'Eed we came out upon the top of a ridge which commanded a magnificent view of the Dead Sea, over the whole of its expanse to the extreme south-

west end, and including a wide range of country west of it. We were all surprised at the beautiful appearance of the placid blue sea far, far below us, its calm surface looking like that of a great mirror set in a massive frame of sable rock and many-colored cliffs. Josephus says that the Dead Sea changes color three times every day, and that seems to be true enough, for its general appearance in the morning is quite different from that under the blazing sun at mid-day, or in the evening when the rocky ramparts that wall it in cast their varied shadows upon it.

Turning southward we followed a mere trail along the side of the general ridge that overhangs the awful gulf of the Dead Sea, and from which we had frequent glimpses of it, and admired the wonderful and perpetual variation in its appearance and color. The character of the country entirely changed, all encampments disappeared, and we were in the lonely and hopeless wilderness, the resort of the ibex, and of more wild and formidable beasts than they. After riding for about three hours we came to an extremely steep descent into the tremendous gorge of the Zerka Mâ'în, where all dismounted and walked. The rock had changed to a soft, yellowish sandstone, and the path, winding downwards, led along narrow ledges which in some places were quite dangerous.

"At length," says Lieutenant Conder, "we reached the brink of the gorge—here some seventeen hundred feet deep, the stream being near the springs [of Callirrhoe] still sixteen hundred feet above the Dead Sea [though only three hundred feet higher than the level of the Mediterranean]. Tawny cliffs of limestone, capped with chalk, rise on the north, and are seamed with gullies, where the marl has been washed down, like snow-streaks left in summer, beneath the cliffs. On the south is a steep brown precipice with an undercliff of marl. But the central feature of this ghastly scene of utterly barren wilderness was the great black bastion projecting from the southern cliff, and almost blocking the gorge—an outbreak of basalt which shows like a dark river in the valley of Callirrhoe, as seen from the west side of the Dead Sea.

"It took a full hour to reach the bottom of the gorge, and the scene beneath was wonderful beyond description. On the south, black basalt, brown limestone, gleaming marl; on the north, sand-

stone cliffs of all colours, from pale yellow to pinkish purple. In the valley itself the brilliant green of palm clumps, rejoicing in the heat and in the sandy soil. The streams, bursting from the cliffs, poured down in rivulets between banks of crusted orange sulphur deposits. The black grackle soared above, with gold-tipped wings, his mellow note being the one sound re-echoed by the great red cliffs in this utter solitude."[1] If any one wants to smell sulphur, breathe sulphur, see sulphur, taste sulphur, bathe in scalding sulphur water, and be nearly stifled with hot sulphur steam, let him descend into that gorge, and visit the hot sulphur springs at Callirrhoe.

Those springs are on the north side of Wady Zerka Mâ'în, and "the brooks, which run from ten springs in all, vary from 110° to 140° Fahrenheit in temperature, and fall in little cascades amid luxuriant foliage, to join the main course of the stream [of the Zerka Mâ'în], which is far colder and fresher, flowing from the shingly springs higher up the valley, and forming pools beneath white rocks of chalk, which we found full of fish, and hidden in a luxuriant brake of tamarisk and cane. Crossing three rivulets, from each of which our horses, apparently aware of the heat of the water, shrank back in fear, we reached the principal hot spring, which has formed a ledge of breccia-like deposit in the valley just north of the basalt cliff. Here the chasm is the narrowest, and the main stream below could be seen winding among black bowlders, which impede its course, with the dark precipice frowning as though about to fall. The stream has bored through the sulphurous breccia, and runs in a tunnel of its own making, issuing from this hot shaft about one hundred feet lower, in the gorge itself."[2]

Upon that tufaceous deposit of sulphur made by the hot steam itself, and which is over twenty feet thick, we rested after our fatiguing descent and ramble up and down that extraordinary valley, and tested the temperature and tasted of the amazing quantity of the hot water which bursts forth from that principal spring. A continuous blast of hot air and steam issues from a crevice in the tufaceous platform; and one of our 'Adwân sheikhs, who was afflicted with rheumatic pains, extemporized a steam-bath by spreading branches and bushes over the aperture and lying upon them, above

[1] Heth and Moab, pp. 145, 146. [2] Heth and Moab, pp. 146, 147.

the boiling water, enveloped in his large 'aba. Whether or not he was cured of his rheumatism by that primitive thermal bath we did not ascertain; but the hot springs of Callirrhoe are celebrated all over the country for their medicinal virtues, and, indeed, they have been known from very ancient times.

In the genealogical catalogue of "the dukes [or emîrs] of the Horites, the children of Seir, in the land of Edom," this singular statement occurs: "This was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father."[1] The word translated "mules" is supposed to signify "hot springs," and it has been suggested that Anah was the first to discover the hot springs of Callirrhoe, as they are by far the most remarkable in this region east of the Dead Sea. Leaving the hypothesis of the mules to stand for what it is worth, the earliest notice of Callirrhoe is given by Josephus in his "Antiquities of the Jews." According to him, Herod the Great "went beyond the river Jordan, and bathed himself in the warm baths that were at Callirrhoe, which, besides their other general virtues, were also fit to drink; which water runs into the lake called Asphaltitis."[2] Herod's condition, however, becoming desperate he was taken back to Jericho, where he died.

In the description which Josephus gives of the fortress of Machærus, where Herod Antipas imprisoned John the Baptist, he mentions "a certain place called Baaras, in that valley which encompasses the city on the north side. Here are also," he says, "fountains of hot water that flow out of this place, which have a very different taste one from the other; for some of them are bitter, and others of them are plainly sweet." And he mentions also two fountains, one very cold and the other very hot, a short distance from each other, "which waters, when they are mingled together, compose a most pleasant bath; they are medicinal, indeed, for other maladies, but especially good for strengthening the nerves. This place has in it also mines of sulphur and alum."[3]

I have always been led to suppose that John the Baptist was beheaded somewhere in Upper Galilee.

Josephus specifies the place, in the fortress of Machærus, far away, indeed, from the scenes of the Baptist's exhortations, and

[1] Gen. xxxvi. 20–24. [2] Ant. xvii. 6, 5. [3] B. J. vii. 6, 3.

where no reader of the New Testament would think of looking for it. There is scarcely a more impressive record in the whole Bible than that of the death of John, when the criminal circumstances of that dismal tragedy are brought to light. Herod, rebuked by the Baptist, banishes him to the most distant fortress in his kingdom; but, entangled by his wicked wife in a war with Aretas, he was, apparently, compelled to go himself to that same fortress to oppose the Arabian prince, whose daughter he had divorced in order that he might marry Herodias, "his brother Philip's wife."

It is presumed that she accompanied Herod to Machærus, and that there her daughter danced before him on his birthday, when he "made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief men of Galilee." What followed is well known. Her dancing pleased Herod, and "he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask," even to the half of his kingdom; and, at the instigation of her vindictive mother, she said, "I will that thou give me here the head of John the Baptist in a charger." "Immediately the king sent one of his guard, and he beheaded him in prison, and brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel, and the damsel gave it to her mother. And his disciples came, and took up the corpse, and buried him; and they went and told Jesus."[1]

Josephus informs us that Aretas and Herod "raised armies on both sides, and prepared for war, and sent their generals to fight instead of themselves; and when they had joined battle, all Herod's army was destroyed by the treachery of some fugitives, who, though they were of the tetrarchy of Philip, joined with Herod's army. Now the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist."[2]

What a strange combination of circumstances brought all those persons together in that distant fortress on the frontier!

The subsequent fortunes and misfortunes of the principal actors in that dismal tragedy are of no special interest to us; but there is perhaps no incident mentioned in the Bible upon which contemporaneous history sheds so much light as that of the beheading of John the Baptist by Herod Antipas.

[1] Matt. xiv. 1–12; Mark vi. 14–29.

[2] Ant xviii. 5, 1 2.

Misled by the apparent nearness of the Dead Sea, Dr. Merrill and some of our party attempted to follow the gorge of the Zerka Mâ'în to the shore. "It was a rough, hard scramble," says Dr. Merrill, "but after going for two hours, and becoming terribly exhausted with the heat and a strange sense of depression, we found our time would not be sufficient, even if our strength should hold out, and we returned."[1] I spent the time rambling up and down the river gorge, counting the number of springs, large and small, cold and hot, and in examining with my glass the great mass of dark trap-rock which towers to a height of a thousand feet sheer and more above the left bank of the stream, in the vain hope of seeing some of the ibex, or wild goats, that are said to abound on those impracticable cliffs. The stupendous cliff of columnar basalt just opposite the largest of the hot springs is composed of numberless columns, ranged together like the pipes of a gigantic organ, running up the perpendicular face of the cliff from base to summit, and so arranged that the lower ends are fairly exposed to view, and can easily be counted. After counting more than two hundred, I abandoned the attempt to number them all.

Owing to our long detention at the hot springs of Callirrhoe, we did not start on the return to Mâ'în until late in the afternoon, and it was long after dark before we reached our tents. And that reminds me that our own day is drawing to a close; but we are now amongst the eastern hills of Jebel Neba, and in half an hour we shall stand upon the summit of Nebo, where Moses stood and took his farewell view of the fair and happy land, the Land of Promise. We will cross to the south side of the shallow vale which extends westward towards the ridge above 'Ayûn Mûsa. My object is to show you one of those extraordinary disc-stones which I have spoken of before. Here it is at the ruins of this village or hamlet which Sheikh 'Ali says is called Kufeir Abu Bedd.

It looks like a great millstone, but it is far too large to have ever been intended for that purpose.

It is nearly ten feet in diameter and about a foot and a half thick—a huge, rough-hewn disc, standing on edge with one-third of it sunk into the ground. It has not the usual round hole in the

[1] East of the Jordan, pp. 248, 249.

centre, nor any indications to aid in explaining its use, nor the object in bringing it to this particular spot. There are two others in this Moabite region somewhat similar to it, one of which was discovered by Dr. Merrill on the Shittim Plain. It is called Mensef Abu Zeid, the dish or tray of Abu Zeid. Riding over this plain, and before reaching that disc, on a former occasion, two large wolves came down the side of the hill and crossed the path ahead of us. Sheikh 'Ali tried to bring one of them down with his gun, but the distance was too great, and they only quickened their flight over the plain, and soon disappeared from view.

Our guides are pointing to that low ridge directly west of us, and exclaiming, "Ha, shefa Neba!" Lo, the crest of Nebo! We will ride up its gradual slope, and descend into the slight depression beyond it called Sahl Neba, between it and Jebel Neba, and ascend to the summit of that mount, about a mile distant, which has been generally accepted as "the mountain of Nebo" to which "Moses went up from the plains of Moab."

Jebel Neba seems but a little higher than the plain over which we have been riding all day. It is merely an oblong ridge, which scarcely lifts itself more than a few hundred feet above the fields which spread up to it on the east.

You must remember that the plain of the Belka is an elevated plateau, and that in this vicinity it is about two thousand four hundred feet above the Mediterranean Sea; and though the summit of Jebel Neba is not three hundred feet higher, yet its position near the edge of the tremendous descent to the plain of Abel Shittim adds thirteen hundred feet more to its height, and thus, in reality, it presents a noble stand-point — four thousand feet above the Dead Sea—from which to survey the Promised Land beyond Jordan westward. Though there is nothing to distinguish this mount from other like ridges in sight, some of which are even higher still, we do not hesitate to accept the identification of Jebel Neba with "the Mountain of Nebo." It is as well known to the Bedawîn as the name of Moses himself.

The force of that evidence is greatly increased by the fact that this particular neighborhood is distinguished above all others for the preservation of the ancient and Biblical names of places in it.

Not to mention the Fountains of Moses, in the valley directly below this "Mountain of Nebo," there are Mâ'în, Mâdeba, El 'Al, Hesbân, and many others now bearing the identical names which they had in the time of Moses; and hence it is reasonable to believe that the name of Nebo has come down to us unchanged from the same distant period.

But no mountain can be accepted as "the top of Pisgah," or the hill, that does not fulfil to a reasonable extent the Biblical statements in regard to the view from it which Moses had over the Promised Land. Applying that test to Jebel Neba we find that not only do higher tells to the east hide the Belka from view, but the long dark ridge of el Muslubîyeh, a few miles south, cuts off the prospect in that direction, while on the north and north-west the range of Mount Gilead conceals not only the upper Jordan valley towards the Sea of Galilee, but a large part of the Promised Land to the north and west of that sea or lake.

Leaving this stand-point, therefore, let us descend westward, down this rough and pathless slope, and, crossing a shallow ravine covered with luxuriant grass in the spring, ascend the first of the two oblong tells, half a mile off, called by the common consent of the Bedawîn Jebel Siâghah. The top of this ridge, particularly on the north-western side, is covered with the ruins of a temple, consisting of large blocks of stone, broken columns and cornices; and there were round about it, especially at the east end, the remains of houses and large cisterns to supply the inhabitants with water. If there ever was a city called Nebo in the neighborhood it is more likely to have been upon this ridge, as there are no such remains on the top of Jebel Neba.

The view from these ruins upon Jebel Siâghah, in its length and breadth, is essentially the same as that from our stand-point on Jebel Neba. We will, therefore, ride down and out along the summit of the other tell, which, though lower, extends a quarter of a mile farther towards the west. But, as at Jebel Neba, the first impression is quite disappointing. As to this stand-point itself, there is nothing for the imagination to dwell upon. It is merely a smooth, rounded headland, bare and barren, without cliff or crag above, visible precipice or ravine below. The last of its kind above

the Shittim Plain, it falls away down towards the shore of the Dead Sea, three thousand six hundred feet below, so gently that it can neither be pictured by pencil nor described by pen.

And yet, standing upon this bold and breezy headland, jutting far out above the plain and the Dead Sea, commanding a magnificent outlook north, west, and south, with nothing in front of it to obstruct the range of vision, one cannot help exclaiming, That is "the mountain of Nebo," and this is "the top of Pisgah!" Here, if anywhere in this vicinity, Moses stood when "the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, unto Zoar."[1]

It is well that there should be nothing about this modern Pisgah to foster the tendency to pervert such "high places" by converting them into sites of superstitious idolatry.

Nothing more is desirable than that the view from it should correspond in general with the statement in the last chapter of Deuteronomy; and that is true of this projecting headland or râs of Jebel Siâghah. It may be mentioned, in passing, that the word râs is found in the Arabic Bible in connection with Pisgah, and it is now generally applied to a bold and projecting headland, like this râs of Siâghah, especially when jutting far out into the sea. In regard to the outlook from this stand-point, it is not necessary to insist upon a literal interpretation of general and comprehensive terms, for that would simply require a superhuman agency. For example, there is no stand-point either on Jebel Siâghah or anywhere else in this vicinity from which "all the land of Gilead, unto Dan," can be seen, except by miracle or mirage; nor can "all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea," be brought within the range of the most powerful telescope. The same must be said of "the south," if by that name the Negab be meant, that vast region which extends far away into the wilderness south of Beer-sheba. What can actually be seen from here on a very clear day, by one whose eye is not dim, meets every reasonable demand of the Bible, and has been

[1] Deut. xxxiv. 1-3.

elaborated and described by many travellers, leaving little to be discovered or added to by those who follow them.

In regard to the names Neba and Siâghah, and their identity with Nebo and Pisgah, our guides remarked on a former occasion, when I was here with Dr. Merrill, "Before the Franks came and required us to find two separate mountains, we used the names Neba and Siâghah interchangeably for one and the same ridge. Now we call the one farther east Jebel Neba, and the two tells at the western end of the ridge Jebel Siâghah." That topographical designation and identification of those names by the Bedawîn seems to agree with the mention of "the mountain of Nebo" and "the top of Pisgah," in the thirty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy. Nebo is "the mountain" of which Pisgah is "the top," râs, or headland; and Siâghah is probably only another and an Arabic equivalent for the Hebrew and the English Pisgah.

Is the ridge to the north-east of Jebel Neba identical with the "mountains of Abarim, before Nebo," from which the Hebrews descended to "the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho?"[1]

We shall have something to say on that general subject during the evening in our tents, to which we must now find our way. I see them pitched on a terrace near the southern fountain of 'Ayûn Mûsa, and as the descent is more than a thousand feet, and very steep, I prefer to dismount and walk, to the relief of my horse and the safety of myself.

'Ayûn Mûsa, September 29th. Evening.

Owing, I suppose, to the association of the names in this locality with those of persons and places referred to in connection with the approach of the Hebrews to the Land of Promise, my thoughts have been equally divided between Moses, the law-giver, and Balaam, "the soothsayer," in respect to whom many puzzling and apparently unanswerable questions immediately arise.

With regard to the approach of the Hebrews, it is probable that the various ridges north-east of el Muslubîyeh, and between it and Hesbân, including Jebel Siâghah and the ridge of Jebel Neba, bore the general name of "the mountains of Abarim" in the time of Moses. A division of the host may, therefore, have descended to

[1] Numb. xxxiii. 47-49.

"the plains of Moab" from Wady Hesbân, another by way of Jebel Neba and 'Ayûn Mûsa, and a third by Jebel Siâghah, without, however, taking permanent possession of "the top of Pisgah."

While the children of Israel were encamped upon the Shittim Plain, Balak brought Balaam to the high places of Baal, into the field of Zophim and to the top of Peor, to curse the people from thence. One is surprised to find, where least expected, in the utterances of that false prophet, and in the lofty strains of his poetic inspiration, many of the most sublime conceptions in regard to the God of the children of Israel himself. At the request of Balaam, Balak erected successively seven altars, at three different places, and offered on each altar a bullock and a ram, vainly hoping that Balaam would curse Israel for him from one of those stations.

After the first series of sacrifices, possibly on the ridge of Jebel Neba, "the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and he took up his parable and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."[1]

The second series of sacrifices was offered, apparently in "the field of Zophim," probably somewhere in the grassy vale between Jebel Neba and Jebel Siâghah, and there are several places in that "field" from whence only a part of the Israelites might have been seen. After the sacrifices "the Lord met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth. And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor: God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless; and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it."[2]

After the third, and last, series of sacrifices, which were offered

[1] Numb. xxiii. 1-10.
[2] Numb. xxiii. 14-20.

on "the top of Peor, that looketh toward Jeshimon," perhaps the summit of Jebel Siâghah, now strewn with the ruins of an ancient temple, Balaam took up his parable and said: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lignaloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. Blessed is he that blesses thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee."[1] Balak in anger commanded Balaam to flee, which he did. "And now," said he, "behold, I go to my people: come, therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.

"And he took up his parable and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eye open: I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and he shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way."[2]

Balaam was evidently an unprincipled man, and uttered those prophetic parables against his will, for he afterwards gave evil counsel to the Midianites, and was slain in battle with them when fighting against Israel.[3] And now if you wish to sleep to-night here at the fountains of Moses, under the shadow of "the mountain of Nebo," whereon Barak and Balaam erected their thrice seven altars, and sacrificed twice as many oxen and rams, you will do well to banish from your dreams all those obstinate questions, geographical, historical, psychological, ethical, and the like, which the Biblical history of this region so naturally suggests.

[1] Numb. xxiv. 3-6, 8. [2] Numb. xxiv. 14-19, 25. [3] Numb. xxxi. 8, 16.

XVIII.

THE FOUNTAINS OF MOSES TO THE FORD OF THE JORDAN NEAR JERICHO.

The Fountains of Moses.—The Stream from the Fountains.—Ashdoth-pisgah.—Tul'at es Sufa and the Field of Zophim.—Ascent of Nebo.—The Servant of the Lord and the Land of Promise.—Khurbet Barzeleh.—Grave of Neby 'Abd Allah.—"From the Ancient Times."—Rude Sketches on the Tomb of a Prophet.—A Sanctuary.—The Plain of the Belka and the Plains of Moab.—Heshbon.—Fine Pavement.—Singular Edifice.—Jewish, Roman, and Saracenic Architecture.—Cisterns.—Reservoir.—Fish-pools in Heshbon.—Ruined Cities of Moab.—Prophecy and History.—"The Cry of Heshbon."—Biblical History of Heshbon.—Captured by Alexander Jannæus.—Elealeh.—"The Height."—View from el 'Âl over the Plain of Moab.—"The Pride of Moab."—Descent to 'Ain Hesbân.—Road to Hesbân.—The Turkish Government and the Survey of Moab.—"The Land of Giants."—Rephaims and Emims.—The Children of Lot, Moab and Ammon.—The Amorites.—The Hebrews.—The roving Bedawîn.—Ancient Biblical Names remaining Unchanged.—Kûbalân el Fâdil.—A Bedawîn Sheikh described by Captain Conder.—The Black Tents of an Arab Encampment.—A Noisy Welcome.—Sheikh 'Ali Diâb.—A Patriarchal Scene.—'Ain Hesbân.—Luxuriant Wheat and Barley.—Flour-mills.—The Stream from the Fountain.—Fish-pools.—The Eyes of the Prince's Daughter.—Captain Conder.—"The Gate in Beth-rabbim."—Road from 'Ain Hesbân to the Jericho Ford.—Canon Tristram.—Northern and Southern Sides of Wady Hesbân.—Circle of Dolmens.—The Region between the Mountains and the Plain in the Time of the Hebrews and at the Present Day.—View over the Plain of Abel-shittim.—Valleys and Streams and principal Hills around and upon the Plain.—Beth-jeshimoth.—The little City Zoar.—Beth-haran.—Herod the Great and the Warm Baths at Tell el Hammâm.—Tell Kefrein, Abel-shittim.—Tell Nimrîn, Beth-minrah.—Tell el Hammâm.—M'hadhar or Um Hâthir.—Hubbisa.—Warm Sulphur Springs, Baths, and Aqueduct at Tell el Hammâm.—Clumps of Scraggy Trees.—Apple of Sodom.—Tell Ektanu and Tell er Râmeh.—Betharamphtha.—Julius or Livias.—The Streams in the Wadies.—Group of Dolmens.—Large Disc-stone.—"The Dish of Abu Zeid."—Flooded Wheat-fields.—Plain of Abel-shittim and the Acacia-trees.—Tell Kefrein and Kirjathaim.—Abel-shittim.—Completion of Deuteronomy and the Last Address of the Hebrew Law-giver.—"The Favor of God."—The Spies sent to Jericho.—Deserted Condition of the Plain, and Bustling Activity of the Hebrew Encampment.—The Goodly Tents of Israel.—The Plain of Abel-shittim and

the Camp of the Hebrew Nation.—"From Beth-jesimoth unto Abel-shittim."—Ample Space for the Tribes to Encamp.—Route of the Israelites from the Red Sea.—Expeditions for the Subjugation of Gilead and Bashan.—"Seeing is Believing."—Testimony of the Land to the Truth of the Book.—Passage of the Children of Israel into the Land of Canaan.—High Bluffs on the Banks of the Jordan.—Dividing of the Waters, and the Passing Over of the People.—The Command of the Lord to Joshua.—Return of the Waters of the Jordan.—The Camp at Gilgal near Jericho.—Under the Palm Groves.—"Jerusalem the Mother of us All."—The Land of the Book.

September 30th.

I VISITED the so-called Fountains of Moses this morning in the valley above our tents. How came they to be associated with the name of the great Hebrew law-giver?

Tradition affirms that when "Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah," he rested and refreshed himself at those springs, and from that time they were called the Fountains of Moses unto this day. The northern spring gushes out from under the rocks in the valley, and runs for a short distance over a broad ledge of limestone. The rock extends across the shallow vale from east to west, and the stream falls over the edge of the cliff in a pretty cascade, about thirty feet in height. "The real beauty of the fall," says Canon Tristram, "is best seen on descending; when the overhanging platform is found to be the roof of a cave, its front partially built up with stalagmite below and stalactite above, and water dropping in all directions. The roof is one mass of pendent fronds of maiden-hair fern—the sides are tapestried with them, the floor is carpeted with them," and the cliff is draped with them from top to bottom.[1]

The second spring is about three hundred feet south of the first, and one hundred feet higher up. It bursts out from a small cave at the base of the overhanging cliffs in a single stream, and plunges headlong down the steep declivity westward, to join the foaming torrent from the northern spring below the cascade. After the meeting of the waters the little river rushes on, overshadowed by thickets of blooming oleander and flowering bushes, leaping and tumbling down to the plain two thousand feet below, and thence in deep and narrow channels to the Jordan and the Dead Sea. The springs of 'Ayûn Mûsa are a thousand feet directly below the

[1] Land of Moab, p. 336.

summit of Jebel Neba, and their Biblical name is supposed to have been Ashdoth-pisgah, the Streams of Pisgah, mentioned in Deuteronomy iii. 17, and elsewhere. That identification, therefore, furnishes additional proof that Jebel Neba, towering above us on the south, is the veritable mountain of Nebo, to the top of which Moses probably ascended from these same streams.

This is to be our last day's ride in "the land of Moab," and, indeed, through the region "beyond Jordan, towards the sunrising;" instead, therefore, of going direct to our camp on the bank of that river, we will ascend "the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah," and take a farewell view of the Promised Land from that exalted summit, as Moses did more than three thousand years ago. Our morning survey will be more satisfactory and impressive, in some respects, than the one we had last evening.

Captain Conder found that the name given by the Bedawin to this steep ascent, leading up to the ridge of Jebel Neba from the north, is Tul'at es Sufa, the Ascent of Sufa, and he discovered "that it is radically identical with the Hebrew Zuph," and "in the form 'Ascent of Zuph' it is the modern representative of the old 'Field of Zophim,' or of views."[1] That identification and association of names may well be accepted, for "the field of Zophim" was evidently near Pisgah, and it was the second station where Balak and Balaam built their seven altars.[2]

The ascent of Jebel Neba is much steeper, and the bold headland of Jebel Siâghah projects farther out above the plain of Abel-shittim, than I was aware of yesterday evening.

And now that we have reached "the top of Pisgah," we could willingly spend the whole day here, gazing upon that most interesting of all lands, "the Land of Promise." "Moses was a hundred and twenty years old" when he stood on the top of Pisgah; "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."[3]

[1] Heth and Moab, pp. 129, 130. [2] Numb. xxiii. 14. [3] Deut. xxxiv. 1–7.

Our previous travels through the land, from Beer-sheba to Dan, and this journey over the region beyond Jordan eastward have made us familiar with the Promised Land "through the length of it, and the breadth of it," and we can readily follow the enumeration of the places which Moses saw. And now we can depart and "go over thither," thankful that we have been permitted to stand

"where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er."

We will now start for the banks of the Jordan by way of Hesbân and el 'Âl, the Heshbon and Elealeh which the Hebrews captured from the Amorites as they passed down to "the plains of Moab," below us on the left. The ruins at Hesbân are about five miles distant to the north-east, and it will take us nearly an hour and a half steady riding across the plain to reach them. At Khirbet Barzeleh, upon that low mound to the right, there are some old foundations and a few caverns, but we will not stop to examine them. The grave of Neby 'Abd Allah, however, is worthy of a passing visit, and we will incline to the north and ride up to it.

Our guides regard this Neby 'Abd Allah as a very holy man, whom their ancestors have venerated "min zemân el kadîm," from the ancient times; but they can give no information as to who he was, and the supposition that this is the grave of Moses, "the servant of God," is purely fanciful. The tomb of this prophet is kept in repair—another evidence of the perpetuation of his memory. On the south side of it are the usual representations of rank and hospitality, consisting of rude sketches of the prophet himself on horseback, his coffee-pot, mortar and pestle, coffee-cups and plates. Near this tomb are some ordinary Bedawîn graves and a deep cistern, now dry; and, as in the case of other muzârs, the immediate vicinity of the saint's tomb is a sacred asylum or sanctuary, where ploughs, ox-yokes, goads, and similar agricultural implements of the Arabs are allowed to remain in perfect safety.

We will now follow along the regular road northward from Ma'în to Hesbân. On the right the beautiful plain of the Belka fades away beyond the range of vision, along the vanishing line of the eastern desert, and on the left far below us are "the plains

of Moab," upon which the Hebrews encamped, but they are concealed from our view by the ridge of Jebel Neba.

The site of Heshbon, the ancient capital of "Sihon, king of the Amorites," stands out quite conspicuously above the plain of the Belka, as we approach it from the south.

The ruins at Hesbân cover the sides and summit of an elongated double tell, less than two hundred feet high. Many of the houses and other edifices were evidently built by the Romans, and they were originally more substantial than those of other cities in this region, but none of them are of any special interest. The existing remains are mostly those of prostrate habitations, amongst which are columns, capitals, entablatures, old walls, and massive foundations. Upon the highest part of the tell is a fine pavement in good preservation, which may have belonged to a temple; and on the south-west side of the mound are the walls, almost entire, of a large, singular edifice with some broken columns about it, and exhibiting specimens of Jewish, Roman, and Saracenic architecture. But more than most ancient sites, Hesbân abounds in large vaulted chambers and bottle-shaped cisterns, some of them hewn in the rock, and which may date back to remote antiquity. The city must have depended upon cisterns for its supply of water, for the nearest permanent fountain is at 'Ain Hesbân in the deep valley below it, and distant more than half an hour to the north-west—a most inconvenient resource for the inhabitants of the ancient town at all times, and entirely unsafe in time of war.

There seems to have been a large reservoir on the plain below the city to the east. Were "the fishpools in Heshbon," referred to in the Song of Solomon, similar to that artificial tank?[1]

It certainly was one of the pools in Heshbon, but it probably contained no fish, for they cannot live in stagnant water. If the allusion really was to fish-pools, the royal poet may have had in mind the stream from 'Ain Hesbân, along the course of which are numerous pools where small fishes can still be found. It is more reasonable to suppose, however, that Solomon referred to the pools or reservoirs beside the principal gate of the city itself.

Let us sit down and rest a while under the shadow of this

[1] Solomon's Song vii. 4

strange building, from the ruins of which we can survey the whole of Moab, and even identify the sites of many of those cities that were doomed to destruction, as recorded in the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of Isaiah and the forty-eighth chapter of Jeremiah. Their prostrate walls and ruined habitations, scattered in all directions "far and near," around and about us, testify to the literal fulfilment of those prophetic denunciations, and it is that which imparts a deep and peculiar interest to our pilgrimage "through the land" on this side of the Jordan "towards the sunrising."

We have only to translate prophecy into history to obtain the most impressive picture of this land as our eyes behold it to-day. "From the cry of Heshbon even unto Elealeh, and even unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar even unto Horonaim: for the waters also of Nimrin shall be desolate. Fear, and the pit, and the snare, shall be upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab. A fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon, and shall devour the corner of Moab."[1] And thus the desolation of Moab has been accomplished, more completely than even the prophets foresaw or could ever have imagined.

Heshbon is mentioned in the Bible more frequently than any other city in Moab. We hear of it as the capital of "Sihon, king of the Amorites," who had taken it out of the hand "of the former king of Moab. Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say, Come into Heshbon, let the city of Sihon be built and prepared."[2] After the defeat of Sihon by the Hebrews, on their march to the Jordan, "Heshbon and all the villages thereof" fell into their hands. It was among the cities that were rebuilt by the tribe of Reuben, but it subsequently belonged to the tribe of Gad, and was allotted to the Levites.[3] According to Jephthah, the Israelites continued to reside in Heshbon for at least three hundred years.[4]

Nothing more is heard of it for several centuries down to the time of Isaiah, when it appears that the Moabites had regained possession of it after the captivity of the ten tribes; for it is mentioned among the cities of that people, and included in the prophetic denunciations against them.[5] But in the time of the Mac-

[1] Jer. xlviii. 34, 43, 45. [2] Numb. xxi. 26, 27. [3] Numb. xxxii. 37; Josh. xxi. 39.
[4] Judges xi. 26. [5] Isa. xv. 4; Jer. xlviii. 2, 34, 45.

cabees, about five hundred years later, it was recovered from the Moabites by Alexander Jannæus, who, according to Josephus, took possession of the city and compelled the inhabitants to become Jews.[1] In the fourth century of our era its name occurs in the Onomasticon, and then disappears from the page of history altogether; but many modern travellers have been here since it was first visited by Seetzen, in the early part of this century.

A pleasant ride of twenty minutes across the gently rising plain to the north-east will bring us to el 'Âl, the modern representative of Elealeh. It occupies a commanding position above the plain, on the summit of a natural tell which, according to Captain Warren, is nearly three thousand feet above the level of the Mediterranean Sea; and its modern Arabic name, "the height," is essentially the same as its ancient Hebrew name, the "ascent or height of God."

The existing remains at el 'Âl are more considerable than I expected to find them, and they entirely cover this high tell and extend below it on to the plain of the Belka.

Especially on the east and south there are ancient vaults and cisterns and a few broken columns and large stones marking the sites of former habitations and important buildings; but, as at Hesbân, none of them appear to have been of any special interest. Elealeh being not much more than a mile from Heshbon, they must always have shared in the fortunes and misfortunes of each other, and that sufficiently accounts for the fact that the two are named together in the Biblical narrative. The view from these ruins on the top of the tell over the plain of Moab is singularly impressive from its great extent, utter solitude, and oppressive silence. There is not a tree, nor a village, nor an inhabited house between it and the utmost verge of the horizon. "We have heard of the pride of Moab," says the prophet; "therefore I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh: for the alarm is fallen upon thy summer fruits, and thy harvest is fallen."[2]

We will now descend to 'Ain Hesbân in the valley north-west of the ancient Heshbon. I have come from that fountain to el 'Âl in about an hour; the distance is nearly three miles, and the descent cannot be much less than seven hundred feet. The

[1] Ant. xiii. 15, 4, 5. [2] Isa. xvi. 6, 9.

road leads down the valley and over glaring white rocks. The substratum of this entire region is cretaceous limestone, and the soil is very fertile. I have also been up and down the direct road from 'Ain Hesbân to the ruins at Hesbân, and for some distance, in the steepest part of it, the path appears to have been excavated along the face of the cliff. Beyond that the road is marked by a low wall extending from the top of the ridge across the plain towards the south-west, and reaching almost to the ruins at Hesbân.

I regret that our journey through the land of Moab has been so limited and restricted from necessity; there must be many sites farther south of great Biblical interest and importance.

The Turkish Government has refused to allow any further surveys to be made of this part of the country, and we may congratulate ourselves that we have been enabled to traverse so much of it without fear or favor, thanks to the faithfulness and efficiency of our 'Adwân guards and guides. "In times past" this region east and south-east of the Jordan was called "the land of giants." The Rephaims and Emims dwelt there, and they, perhaps, were the descendants of those troglodytes who erected the dolmens and other monuments which puzzle archæologists at the present day. Then came the children of Lot—Moab and Ammon—and drove out the giants and occupied their country. They in turn were expelled from most of their territory by the Amorites, who appear to have forced their way between the Moabites and Ammonites and taken possession of their towns and villages.

The Hebrews, led by Moses, conquered them, and their territory was divided between Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. After several centuries the descendants of those sons of Israel were carried away captive by the Assyrians and Babylonians from the far east. Thus all nations and tribes who occupied this land in succession, during the long ages of the past, have one and all disappeared. All have vanished entirely, and the prowling and roving Bedawîn have come up like the locusts over the land, utterly ignorant of their origin and the history of their race.

It is a great satisfaction to know that, notwithstanding the numberless changes of races and rulers, we can be as certain that Moses and the chosen tribes came here and conquered the country, as

that David reigned in Jerusalem, or that any other important event recorded in Biblical history actually took place.

And it is more than satisfactory to feel assured that the Hebrews beheld this very region through which we are now passing; that they not only saw, but actually lived in the cities whose ruins we have visited, and called them by the identical names which we have heard given to them by the ignorant Bedawîn after the lapse of more than thirty centuries. This prolonged identity is unique in history, and it furnishes a strong corroboration of the truth of the Biblical narratives concerning the wonderful events that occurred in this region in those ancient times.

We have made a great descent from the ruins at el 'Âl during the past hour, and for the last ten minutes we have been ascending the valley above the bank of this pretty little stream.

It comes from 'Ain Hesbân, and this beautiful wady is the summer retreat of Sheikh Goblân or Kŭbalân el Fâdil, the well-known chieftain of the Nimr branch of the 'Adwân Bedawîn of the Belka. Fortunately for us he is absent, and we thus escape the necessity and consequent delay of a formal call upon him. When I saw him last he was determined to make me a present of his mare, well knowing that, whether the gift was accepted or not, I would be obliged to make him a suitable bakhshîsh. Captain Conder thus describes him:

"Riding slowly on a bay mare, he approached with four mounted followers. His figure is one remarkably striking at first sight. A tall, gaunt man, with a grey, bronzed face half hidden by his kufeyeh, one eye red and sightless from a sword-cut which has furrowed all one cheek. His hair long and silvery, and his beard quite white. His age probably seventy, though he believed himself to be about forty. He wore a double kufeyeh [about his head], the inner black, the outer one black with gold embroidery. His shirt was white and clean, with a kumbaz, or long gown [over it], fastened by a belt, with yellow and purple vertical stripes. The white sleeves of the shirt hung out beyond those of the gown, reaching to his feet, which were cased in loose boots of red leather, without any sock or stocking. Over all he wore a beautiful abba, or cope-like mantle, of broad white and amber-coloured stripes. This most

picturesque costume was strangely at variance with the long, lean figure, the red eye, the muffled voice, the thick, obstinate nose, and the long gash on the bony, dusky cheek; but the hand was soft, and the white nails carefully trimmed."[1]

And there are the black tents of the Bedawîn Arabs pitched on both sides of the stream from 'Ain Hesbân — the largest encampment of the 'Adwân tribe we have yet seen.

Our approach creates a general buzz and bustle amongst the miscellaneous inhabitants; horses snort and neigh, donkeys prick up their long ears and bray, dogs rush frantically about and bark ferociously, while men, women, and children gather in groups to welcome us as we ride by — a very animated, picturesque, and even interesting spectacle. We will pass on to 'Ain Hesbân, a short distance above the camp, where we will stop and rest. Sheikh 'Ali has brought us a pitcher of cool, fresh water from the fountain—a most welcome offering, for the latter part of our ride has been extremely warm. The last time I was here there were four separate encampments in sight, one above the fountain and three below it. That of Sheikh 'Ali Diâb, the chief of the elder branch of the 'Adwân tribe, called 'Ashîret Sâleh, was much the largest, and his tent must have been more than sixty feet long. The whole neighborhood was alive with Bedawîn—men, women, and children—and the various possessions of the tribe: a scene eminently patriarchal, and a fit place to observe the manners and customs of a nomadic life similar to that of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of Moses, and even the children of Israel themselves.

'Ain Hesbân is a noble fountain of beautifully clear water, flowing out from a small cave under the cliff on the north side of Wady Hesbân, and it forms at once a fine mill-stream. The valley comes down from the east and is quite dry; but below the fountain it trends round to the south-west, and in the spring the fields on each side of the stream are covered with luxuriant wheat and barley. Formerly there were several flour-mills along the banks of the stream from 'Ain Hesbân which flows through the valley southward for two or three miles, and then plunging down a romantic ravine turns westward and runs down to "the plains of Moab," and

[1] Heth and Moab, pp. 110, 111.

thence to the Jordan. Now there is but a single dilapidated mill—a sure indication that the population of this region, even in modern times, was much greater than it is at present.

When encamped here with Dr. Merrill, I rode for some distance along the banks below the fountain to see the little pools made by the stream, in which there were many small fishes. As we have already observed, it has been supposed that the royal poet referred to them in his "Song," when he compares the eyes of the "prince's daughter" to "the fishpools in Heshbon."[1] There never was either fountain or running stream in that city on the elevated plateau above 'Ain Hesbân, nor sparkling pools; only dark cisterns or open tanks of rain-water in which fish cannot live. Captain Conder says, "This [brook], though shallow, has many fish in it, and reminded us of 'the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate in Bath-rabbim,' which gate we supposed might be the passage cut through the rocks at the top of the steep, winding mountain-path from the stream to the city on the plateau above."[2]

The road we are to follow from 'Ain Hesbân to the ford of Nŭwâimeh, after passing the top of the ridge west of the fountain, leads northward for an hour, and thence westward for about two hours, down an easy descent north of Wady Hesbân, to Tell el Hammâm at the foot of the mountain. From there it crosses "the plains of Moab," upon which the Hebrews encamped in the time of Moses, to the ferry over the Jordan near Jericho. Canon Tristram and his party followed down the valley from 'Ain Hesbân to the plain, keeping mostly on the south side of the wady, the other side being in many places quite impracticable.

"Marked was the contrast," he says, "between the rugged red sandstone cliffs, sharp and precipitous, dotted with eagles' and vultures' nests, which formed the north wall of the wady, and the more gentle terraced slopes covered with luxuriant verdure, unscorched by the sun, which bounded it on the south. On the last rocky eminence which pushed forward into [the plain] were the most perfect primæval remains we had found in the country. Round the slightly elevated crest at the western end of the ridge was a perfect circle of dolmens, each composed of three upright

[1] Solomon's Song vii. 4.

[2] Heth and Moab, pp. 125, 138.

and one covering stone. Several of them had fallen, but the stones were in their places, and it was clear that they had been arranged in a circle round a great cairn, or central pile of stones, which crowned the 'tell,' and doubtless marked the burial-place of some hero famous in his day, but who lived before Agamemnon."[1]

A great change has come upon this region since the Hebrew host passed this way down to their camping-ground on the acacia meadow, or Abel-shittim. Since leaving 'Ain Hesbân we have not seen a single individual, nor even a flock of goats with its Bedawîn shepherd and noisy dogs. Then all these valleys and hills must have been alive with "much cattle," and thousands of men, women, and children must have crowded every practicable pathway down to "the plains of Moab."

This silent solitude is not always so deserted even now. In the spring the plain itself presents a very different aspect. The peasants from es Salt and elsewhere are then busy attending to their crops, and large flocks from the Belka and other parts of Moab slowly wend their way down to the ferry of Nŭwâimeh, destined to supply the markets in Jerusalem during the pilgrim season. This is, also, not the only way from the high plateau of Moab to the Jordan, but it is the easiest one; and since the establishment of the ferry it is the most frequented. The road now winds down this narrow ridge with profound ravines on either side, all of which are dry, rocky, and impracticable.

The Hebrews must have had an extensive view of the plain from many places along this descent from the plateau of Moab.

Let us turn aside and rest a while under the shadow of that great rock while we contemplate this glorious prospect. We can see the entire plain of Abel-shittim, the Jordan valley, and the endlessly diversified hills of Judea, the Dead Sea, and every tell upon "the plains of Moab" from Tell Suweimeh on the south to Tell Nimrîn on the north. The entire western face of these Moabite mountains, from es Salt to "the mountain of Nebo," is drained by a number of wadies, all of which debouch on to Ghôr es Seisabân, as "the acacia meadow," or Abel-shittim, is now called.

Beginning at the south, the principal ones are Wady 'Ayûn

[1] Land of Moab, pp. 345, 347.

Mûsa under Nebo, then Wady Hesbân, and beyond it Wady Kefrein and Wady Sha'ib with its little river, which flows down from es Salt, past Tell Nimrîn, and irrigates that part of the plain. The stream from Kefrein rises in the mountains east of 'Arâk el Emir, near a ruin called Khirbet Sâr, and enters the plain between Tell Kefrein on the north and Tell el Hammâm on the south. The little stream from 'Ain Hesbân comes from Wady Hesbân and flows past and to the north of Tell Ektanu and Tell er Râmeh, and the waters from 'Ayûn Mûsa flow down the valley of the same name and join the stream of Wady Jerîfeh. After reaching the plain of Abel-shittim all those streams from the different wadies cut their own deep and narrow channels westward to the Jordan.

The principal tells on the plain of Abel-shittim, commencing at the southern end and proceeding northward, are Tell es Suweimeh, identified with Beth-jeshimoth, a town allotted to the children of Reuben;[1] Tell Ektanu, supposed by Dr. Merrill "to be the site of the 'little city' of Genesis xix. 20;" Tell er Râmeh, identified by Canon Tristram with Beth-haran, one of the fenced cities rebuilt by the children of Gad;[2] Tell esh Shaghûr, with the ruins of a flour-mill near it; Tell el Hammâm, to the warm baths of which Herod the Great may have been taken before his death, instead of to Callirrhoe; Tell Kefrein, also identified by Canon Tristram and others with Abel-shittim of Numbers xxxiii. 49; and Tell Nimrîn, which marks the site of Beth-nimrah, a fenced city and a fold for sheep, built by the children of Gad.[3]

We have now reached Tell el Hammâm, the mound of the bath, at the foot of the mountain. I spent two nights near it, encamped on the west bank of this pretty little stream from Wady Kefrein, and I passed the intervening day wandering about this beautiful plain and exploring the surrounding hills. Tell el Hammâm is a high natural mound at the south-eastern end of the plain, and commands a wide view over it to the south and west, and the stream from Wady Kefrein flows past its north-western base. No part of the tell is artificial except the top, which is covered with the débris of ancient buildings which may be of any age. The summit appears to have been surrounded with a wall, and if it was well

[1] Josh. xiii. 20. [2] Numb. xxxii. 36. [3] Numb. xxxii. 36.

fortified it would command the entrance into the mountains up Wady Kefrein. "Nearly a mile from Tell el Hammâm," says Dr. Merrill, "up Wady Kefrein, is a ruin called M'hadhar [Um Hâthir?], and around it is a trench. In the valley below it is a ruined mill, standing on a little knoll called Jaudat. Opposite M'hadhar, on the south side of the wady, is another ruin called Hubbisa."[1]

Tell el Hammâm is so called from some warm sulphur springs near the base of it on the south-west. They form a marsh covered with bushes and alive with frogs. Baths appear to have been built close by, but all has been deserted for ages, no one knows how many. "On the east of Tell el Hammâm, at the foot of the hill, is a fine aqueduct. It is cemented, and for the most part covered with earth. Were it not exposed at a few points, one would not be aware of its existence. It runs to the south from Wady Kefrein, and appears not to have been used for a long time."[2]

Near the warm springs there are clumps of straggling and scraggy trees about fifteen feet high. The leaves and berries resemble those of the olive, and the latter are said to be eaten by the Ghawârineh Arabs. Our 'Adwân sheikhs say the tree is held sacred by them, and the wood is not burned — possibly because, like the cactus, it will not ignite. Sheikh 'Ali broke off a twig and rubbed his teeth and gums with it, saying that it cleansed them and sweetened the breath. The osher-tree, or apple of Sodom, also abounds in that neighborhood, and the banks of the stream that comes down from Wady Kefrein are overshadowed by dense thickets of reeds, oleanders, and other wide-spreading bushes.

Dr. Merrill, who carefully explored this region and bestowed special attention to the various tells, says: "But of all this group of tells [on the Shittim plain] the ruins on Tell Ektanu are the most important. One building on its summit was two hundred feet from east to west, with an entrance on the east side. The foundation stones are large, while above these are the remains of a layer of conglomerate stones, which have fallen to pieces with age or by the action of the climate. But Tell er Râmeh is the place where I would like first to put in the spade. This is the Beth-haran of Joshua — the Betharamphtha of Josephus — a place

[1] East of the Jordan, p. 232. [2] East of the Jordan, p. 232.

which Herod Antipas rebuilt and called Julias, or Livias, in honor of Julia, the wife of Augustus [the Empress Livia].

"As in nearly every other instance in the Jordan valley, so here towns sprang up on or near a living stream, and generally not far from where it left the hills. The stream in Wady Kefrein flows under and just north of Tell el Hammâm. The stream in Wady Hesbân flows north of Tell Ektanu, and also near Tell er Râmeh. They are both large streams, and we must cross on horseback or else wade; and getting wet is good neither for health nor comfort.

"Between Tell Ektanu and Tell el Hammâm there is, near the hill, a large group of dolmens. In a few cases the roof stone is pointed, with sloping sides like the covers of some sarcophagi that are found in different parts of the country. It is remarkable that no satisfactory explanation of these curious objects has ever been made. About half-way between these two places I found an immense circular stone lying on the top of the ground. It is eleven feet four inches in diameter, forty-four inches thick, and has a round hole in the centre twenty-five inches in diameter. It is made of hard sandstone, unlike any that exists in the neighboring hills, and it must have been brought from the north. The outer edge is slightly convex, and the stone does not appear to have been used."[1]

That large disc-stone, called by the Bedawîn Mensef Abu Zeid the tray or dish of Abu Zeid, significant of his generous hospitality, presents as great a puzzle as the dolmens; but of course such stones are comparatively modern. They evidently were not intended for millstones, nor for any practical use; yet they are very substantial realities, and those who cut out of the solid rock such huge discs must have had some special object in view which fully compensated them for their great labor and expense.

We are now on our way from Tell el Hammâm to Tell Kefrein. When we came from the Nŭwaîmeh ford to Tell el Hammâm, the wheat-fields through which we tried to pass had been flooded from the stream, and our horses floundered about and waded across them with great difficulty. We were obliged to turn southward, cross the deep channel of the stream, and find a path on the south side which proved to be smooth and hard, and we followed it all the

[1] East of the Jordan, pp. 230, 231.

way to our camp at the foot of Tell el Hammâm. We shall not experience a similar difficulty now, and can keep along the direct road to the ford which passes to the south of Tell Kefrein.

The nearer views we get of this plain are somewhat surprising. It is not so level, and much of it is apparently not very fertile, the outline of the eastern border is irregular and broken up by rocky spurs from the mountains of Moab; and the acacia-trees, the Biblical shittah, from which the plain derived its most familiar name, are less numerous than I expected to find them.

Farther north the road from the ford to es Salt by Tell Nimrîn passes through the middle of what appears from a distance to be extensive groves of those trees; but even along that route there are now no dense forests of acacia-trees. The old and gnarled acacias, however, scattered here and there upon this Shittim plain, testify in the strongest degree to the appropriateness of its Biblical name, and they are no doubt the descendants of the shittah-trees which covered this plain in the time of Moses.

We will now turn to the right, and leaving the road, ascend that low artificial mound ahead of us, called Tell Kefrein. It is surrounded "on all sides [by] rivulets," as Captain Warren remarks, "passing through dense masses of underwood, and carried off here and there for irrigating purposes." The remains about and upon the tell, and on its small rocky summit, are quite insignificant, consisting of traces of walls and old foundations, a few vaults, and some caverns which, Sheikh Ali says, are used in winter to store away the surplus supply of straw belonging to the 'Adwân. Tell Kefrein—the mound of the two villages—so far as the sound and signification of the name is concerned, might stand for Kirjathaim, the double city, rebuilt by the Reubenites. It has, however, been identified by Canon Tristram, Captain Warren, Dr. Merrill, and others with Abel-shittim itself, from which this plain derived its name; and around it the Israelites pitched their last camp east of the Jordan, before they entered the Land of Promise.

If that identification be correct, it imparts a peculiar interest to this lowly mound and the surrounding region; for here, according to Josephus, Moses completed the book of Deuteronomy, and amid the palm-trees of the place he delivered his last address to

the children of Israel. "Come, therefore," said the Hebrew law-giver, "let me suggest to you by what means ye may be happy. O children of Israel! there is but one source of happiness for all mankind, the favor of God."[1] And from here "Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land. And they went to Jericho and lodged in the house of Rahab."[2]

The ford of the Jordan, near which we shall find our tents, is about three miles distant from this Tell of Kefrein; and that we may reach them before dark we must spur on our horses to a brisk pace over this smooth road and comparatively level plain.

How different this plain of Abel-shittim must have been when the Hebrew host was encamped upon it from what it is at present! Now it is strangely silent and entirely deserted, and we have not seen a single individual in our ride across it.

At this season of the year even the Bedawîn, with their tents and their flocks, have migrated to the green valleys and elevated plateaus of Moab, and the silence and solitude of the plain are quite oppressive. But when thousands of tents covered the surface farther than the eye could reach, there was here a whole world of human life and busy activity. Neither pencil can picture nor pen adequately describe the wonderful scene, nor can imagination reproduce it. History records nothing with which to compare it, in this or in any land, and no wonder that Balaam, when he looked upon the scene from the mountain of Nebo, and "saw Israel abiding in his tents, according to their tribes," exclaimed, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lignaloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters, and blessed is he that blesseth thee."[3]

We have now reached the western edge of this plain of Abel-shittim, and an easy descent of fifteen minutes along a winding path will bring us to our tents, pitched on this side Jordan, near the ferry of Nŭwaîmeh.

Jericho Ford, September 30th. Evening.

While we were riding across the plain of Abel-shittim this afternoon, the question whether it was large enough to contain the

[1] Ant. iv. 8, 1, 2. [2] Josh. ii. 1. [3] Numb. xxiv. 2, 5, 6, 9.

camp of the entire Hebrew nation was constantly recurring to my mind. According to the census which Moses was commanded to take of the children of Israel, after their encampment on "the plains of Moab," the number of the men who were "twenty years old and upward," and of all that were "able to go to war," was six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty.[1] Multiplying by four, to obtain the number of the whole nation, we get the large figure of two million four hundred and six thousand nine hundred and twenty, without the Levites. Was there sufficient space on the plain for the tents of such a vast multitude?

At first these questions appear sufficiently formidable, but the result of a little calculation will surprise you. If we take the average size of a tent among the Bedawîn Arabs of to-day, and allow ten persons to a tent, and then suppose that the children of Israel in their totality numbered three millions, they would require three hundred thousand tents. Allowing twenty square rods for each tent, such an encampment would require six million square rods; but there are at least twelve million square rods on these "plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho." The children of Israel "pitched by Jordan, from Beth-jesimoth even unto Abel-shittim in the plains of Moab."[2] That is—if the identification of those places be correct —from Tell Suweimeh on the south to Tell Kefrein on the north. The width of "the plains" in the neighborhood of those tells, including the wadies and adjacent hill-sides where tents could be pitched, is about eight miles, while the length from the shore of the Dead Sea and the foot-hills of "the mountain of Nebo" extends northward for fifteen miles. That gives an area of one hundred and twenty square miles, or over twelve million square rods, and allows of ample space for the tribes to encamp in "the plains of Moab, from Beth-jesimoth even unto Abel-shittim."

I have followed the supposed route of the Israelites from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai, and thence across the great and terrible "wilderness of the wandering," and I nowhere saw a place for encamping at all comparable to this. With one or two possible exceptions, all the forty stations at which they pitched after crossing the Red Sea were sadly deficient in good water, while here the

[1] Numb. xxvi. 1, 2, 51. [2] Numb. xxxiii. 49.

space was ample and the supply of water abundant and never failing. From that great encampment here on this plain those military expeditions went forth, which subdued Gilead and Bashan and enabled the two and a half tribes to occupy their chosen inheritance east of the Jordan. Somewhere on these plains, near Tell Kefrein perhaps, Moses had his head-quarters, and there doubtless he composed the book of Deuteronomy, and rehearsed it in the ears of all the people, for it is stated that "on this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law."[1]

I should like to read the whole of it here where it was written, having Moab and Gilead and far-distant Bashan for background, with Canaan's fair and happy land in full view, while Jordan rolls between. I am thankful that we have been permitted to traverse those regions, and to encamp upon this plain.

Seeing is believing, according to the proverb; but "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." That there actually is here just such a plain as this is required to confirm the statement in the narrative that the incidents said to have occurred at Abel-shittim did really take place. And to that extent at least the testimony which the land of the Bible bears to its veracity is of essential importance. We have had around us hundreds of witnesses, on this side of Jordan and on that, in mountains, valleys, and plains, in fountains, rivers, and lakes, in trees and plants, in birds and beasts, in the works of man scattered over the whole country, and in the ancient sites found everywhere throughout the land and still bearing their ancient names—and they all testify to the credibility of the Biblical record. And yet that is only one of the many ways in which this promised land to the patriarchs of old confirms and illustrates that book of books, our blessed Bible.

Where did the children of Israel pass over this river of the Jordan into the land of Canaan?

The account of that wonderful passage given in the third and fourth chapters of Joshua furnishes no topographical data by which that question can be answered with exactness. We read that the host "removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan and lodged there [for three days] before they passed over." If we assume that there

[1] Deut. i. 5.

was but one broad crossing-place, it probably did not extend much farther up the Jordan than this ford of Nŭwaîmeh, or Mukhâdat el Ghoranîyeh, the ford of the Ghor or Jordan valley. Above it the upper plain of the Jordan valley terminates on the western side of the river in high perpendicular bluffs, which would present an insuperable obstacle to the ascent of the host to Gilgal. Those bluffs, however, end abruptly a short distance north of this ford, and from thence southward to the Dead Sea there would have been no obstacle in the way; and the various tribes, after crossing, could have proceeded directly from the banks of the river to their appointed stations "in the east border of Jericho."

It is difficult to realize that we are now encamped near the place where one of the most stupendous miracles was enacted that God has ever wrought in behalf of His chosen people.

In one important respect that crossing over Jordan is more impressive than the passing of the Israelites through the Red Sea. Here, at least, there is no question as to where the crossing was made. Somewhere in this vicinity, the Jordan, full to the overflowing of all its banks, was divided, and "the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap, and those that came down toward the salt sea failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho."[1] That unparalleled migration into Palestine, or invasion of it, by the Hebrew nation was made in obedience to the command of God: "Have I not commanded thee?" said the Lord to Joshua. "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." Leaving the banks of the Jordan, the children of Israel marched a few miles westward, and encamped, according to the Biblical record, "in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho," and "the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before."[2] Jericho was then called "the city of palm-trees," by way of eminence, and the surrounding plain was probably overshadowed by large groves of those graceful trees. Beneath them were doubtless pitched the countless tents of the children of Israel, and there we will leave them to carry out their divinely appointed mission.

[1] Josh. iii. 15, 16. [2] Josh. iv. 18.

Having thus followed that triumphant entrance of the Hebrew nation into the earthly Canaan — type and prophecy and promise of that other passage through another river to an inheritance in the better land, "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for us,[1] it remains for ourselves to cross, on the morrow, this same Jordan, not on dry land, but in that rude and clumsy ferry-boat, and from thence to ascend the mountain to the Holy City—that type, in Biblical symbolism, of the "Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all."[2] After a farewell survey of the sites and scenes within and around Jerusalem we will go down to Joppa by the sea-side. From that city our travels "through the land, in the length of it, and the breadth of it," began, and there we will end them, devoutly thankful to our Heavenly Father for His providential guidance and protection in all our wanderings over this Land of Promise, the home of the Bible —the Land of the Book.

[1] I Peter i. 4.

[2] Gal. iv. 26.



INDEX OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS ILLUSTRATED.

ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

INDEX OF NAMES AND SUBJECTS.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS USED.

'Ain, Hebrew En, Fountain.
Aklîm, District.
Bâb, Door or Gate.
Beit, Hebrew Beth, House.
Belâd, District.
Bîr, Hebrew Beer, Well or Cistern.
Birkeh, Birket, Pool.
Burj, Tower.
Deir, Convent.
Ed, Edh, El, En, Es, Esh, Et, Ez, The.
Jebel, Mountain.
Jisr, Bridge.
Kabr, Tomb.
Khân, Inn or Caravansary.
Khirbeh, Khirbet, Ruin.
Kul'ah, Kŭl'at, Castle.
Merj, Plain or Meadow.
Mughârah, Mughârat, Cave, Cavern.
Mukâm, Shrine or Saint's Tomb.
Muzâr, Shrine or Saint's Tomb.
Nahr, River.
Neba', Fountain.
Neby, Prophet.
Râs, Head or Promontory.
Tell, Hill or Mound.
Wady, Valley or Watercourse.
Wely, Saint's Tomb.



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